NONE SO BLIND

ALBERT PARKER FITCH

N. Tolli

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/bwb_P9-EBO-144

NONE SO BLIND

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

NONE SO BLIND

BY
ALBERT PARKER FITCH

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1924
All rights reserved

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

COPYRIGHT, 1924,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1924.

NONE SO BLIND

NONE SO BLIND

I

A QUIET room, proud and shabby. As though the late Colony, with its hand-made furniture, copied from models of across the seas, the ancient East and the Boston of the clipper ships, and the present world, with its standardized comforts and machine conveniences, had come to an agreement there and, in some way, been welded into one. Hanging above the chimney-piece was a portrait of a woman in her early thirties, the pale oval of a delicate face half hidden behind the folds of a dotted veil. The dark eyes burned steadily through the transparent meshes of the fabric; the firm lips, warm and sensitive, seemed pressed against their filmy covering as if forever trembling on the point of speech.

Two women were sitting beneath the drop-light at the center-table. On one side, Mrs. Morland, a small decisive figure, her face buried in the pages of *The Boston Evening Transcript*. Beneath the knitting in her lap, her dress fell, in decent folds of black, about the Brussells hassock at her feet. Above the sheet she was holding showed white ruching, caught, at the hollowed throat, by a gold and onyx brooch; ruching also about the fragile wrists, and, on the lean hand grasping the paper, a hoop of bluish pearls, encircling the diminutive wedding-finger. Across from her sat her daughter, legs neatly crossed, one hand holding James' *The Ambassadors,* the other idly dangling a ribbon marker before the paws of a gray kitten, extended in her lap. As she concluded the final pages she looked up, something of cool whimsicality in her glance.

"Well, I suppose there are some people who can understand this novel! I can't make out whether the lady is unbelievably high-minded or incredibly immoral!" She glanced toward the clock. "By the way, dear, will you let me have the drawing-room this evening? To-night's the freshman dinner."

Mrs. Morland absently surveyed her daughter.

"I hardly see the connection, Felicia. They are not dining here!"

"They're not 'dining' anywhere, Mater! They're having an uproarious celebration somewhere in the vicinity of Scollay Square. The connection is that Dick Blaisdell's coming over."

"Because of the dinner?"

"I fancy so. He has a freshman room-mate with whom I've heard he doesn't get on. And men do so resent seeing another fellow, whom they don't like, going off, without them, for a good time. He's probably coming to talk about it. Not that he knows it! But that's why he really is."

"But Dr. Barrett usually calls on Tuesday."

"Does he? I'm rather glad—if Dick's going to be here, too."

"Please call him Mr. Blaisdell, dear!"

"All right. It won't do Percy Barrett any harm to discover that he hasn't a monopoly of the evening."

"Richard Blaisdell," said Mrs. Morland reflectively. "I don't seem to remember him. Who is Richard Blaisdell?"

"Goodness, Mother, don't you remember that heavy, powerful-looking sort of boy, Francis introduced to us three years ago? You certainly can't have forgotten his first call —you were so appallingly polite, and he so helplessly miserable. I never did see a more angrily unhappy man!"

"Indeed; I don't recall him. But, judging from your description of him, I can't quite see why he should want to come again."

"I told you, dear. I suppose he's coming because he wants to talk about himself; that's why most of them do.

Men are such childlike creatures, with their careful deceits and their elaborate transparencies. That's why I want to see him alone. He'll purl on then like a running brook —once someone gets him started." She paused, "Don't worry, Mother dear, about chaperoning me. He's not in love; he has no special affection for your little daughter. It's just 'woman and home' he wants. Any one of us would answer his simple purpose just as well."

Mrs. Morland regarded her daughter objectively.

"What a way to talk, Felicia! And, please, don't cross your ankles in that manner! Why do you girls speak things out so, nowadays? We used to think it indecorous for a young woman to let herself say all she thought or knew."

"And we, Mother, think it much worse to think and know things we don't say."

"Well, of course, dear, you may have the drawing-room. I must go upstairs directly anyway, and write to Ellen Gorham. Did you see in to-night's paper that Captain Gorham's gone?"

"Why, no. I don't read that part of it. He was father's commanding officer at Antietam, wasn't he? Weren't they both in the Forty-fourth? Imagine living to be as old as Miss Ellen and still having a father!"

"My dear child, Ellen can't be a day over forty! But it will be a dreadful blow to her. She has just built her life around his."

"Rather a mistake, isn't it, Mater? Doesn't seem natural. You'll want to send some flowers to her from the old garden, won't you? There's my pot of chrysanthemums that Dennis took up for me in the autumn; you can have those."

"Yes," said Mrs. Morland absently, "thank you. Felicia, how fast they are going!"

"Indeed they're not; they're full of blooms still! Oh, I beg pardon! Yes, I know. But he was very old, wasn't he?"

"He was two years older than your father," said Mrs.

Morland stiffly. "Now about this Mr. Blaisdell, Felicia. Do we know anything of his people?"

"I remember Alice's saying once that his grandfather had been a Methodist 'rider'—whatever that may mean!"

"It means an itinerant preacher," said Mrs. Morland shortly. "I suppose they lived on the frontier."

"Sounds interesting, doesn't it? Frontiers are a long way off from here! When I was in New York last Easter, his mother asked Alice and me to tea."

"Oh! So the Farringtons visit them?"

"Alice's father does the law work for their business."

"I see. And where do they live, dear?"

"I wish you could see where they live! You would never forget it! It's a perfectly mammoth apartment house; a sort of human rabbit warren——"

"Really, Felicia——"

"I can't help it, that's just what it does look it! It fronts the Hudson like a cliff of cast-iron, and inside there are two little brown bunnies dressed up in uniforms for elevator boys—some men do have faces like rabbits—and then there's a marble pavement, and a circular staircase with a crimson velvet hand-rail. I expected to see Queen Louise or the Empress Josephine come sailing down it any moment!"

"But what sort of a person is his mother?"

"Oh, she's a nice enough woman—only funny! All I can remember was a tremendous silver tea-service, and her rings all mixed up with it, as she poured. They positively glittered in and out like fireflies."

"As pretentious as that?"

"I don't imagine it's pretentious to them, Mother; they think it's real."

Mrs. Morland sat forward in her old chair. Under the graying hair her cheeks were faintly flushed; the peering eyes filled with a delicate disdain.

"Hardly interesting to us! Still it does help one to understand how different from our own homes are those

of these young men whom Francis brings over here. No wonder one doesn't know how to place them or that they seem to take everything for granted! One may expect that a growing boy is a good deal like a nice puppy, but what I do object to is these complacent young barbarians!"

"Oh, yes," said Felicia with a chuckle, "they're complacent! But there are cures for it! Besides, when they are most outrageously assertive, if you only knew it, they are so terribly shy and innocent underneath. They know all about life, but they haven't lived it."

"Well, I should hope not!" said Mrs. Morland. "Neither have you!"

"No," demurely, "but somehow while they have seen it, I feel to understand it better. But he'll soon be here, Mother."

Mrs. Morland caught up her old-fashioned glasses and held them to her near-sighted eyes to study the clock.

"Soon? Impossible! No young gentleman from the college would call before eight?"

"He's not a young gentleman, Mother, he's an undergraduate. And he's likely to come any minute. They eat at such unheard of hours! Francis is a trifle more civilized because he's in one of the dining clubs, but the rest of them—why, they positively flow in streams to Memorial Hall for half-past-five o'clock dinners."

Mrs. Morland began creasing the *Transcript* into precise folds. Then she looked up very steadily at her daughter.

"Felicia, surely this boy isn't quite our sort. You know what the college means to us. My brother teaches there, and your father, and your father's father, were graduated from the old Meeting-house. They and their classmates were great men! Some of them died at twenty-five at the head of their troops. The country called," she went on, her voice lifting a little, "and they answered. They poured out all their lives, their youth, their hope, their future, in one splendid instant. It is their sons who belong with us. These other boys, what can they know about the great men of the

college and the country? How have they been trained? They come to Harvard just to get what our men gave: our boys go to give it again and carry it on."

"They'd be terribly surprised to hear it! Don't you see, Mother, that old Boston of yours—it just *isn't* any more? That great neighborhood town of ministers and lawyers and China merchants, with a common stock and a common ideal —that old Hill aristocracy that had married and intermarried until everybody had some tie with everybody else—it's mostly gone now."

"I don't know what you mean, Felicia. There is yourself and Francis, and Jack Trowbridge, and the Wards, and all the rest of our own people!"

"That is just what I'm getting at! Can't you understand that they, Jack and the rest, are not like—they just can't be like—the boys who made the college and the society you remember. Those men were brought up on Emerson. and Margaret Fuller and the Classics! The girls those boys knew were like Francis' godmother, Miss Alcott; they were like Beth, and Amy, and Jo in Little Women! But there aren't any such boys, nor any such girls either, now and, goodness knows, the college isn't their kind of a place! The boys don't go there any more for polite learning and the 'manly accomplishments'; they study mostly economics and chemistry and engineering and social hygiene and business. You know what the law meant to Father, as a profession? Well, I can't see that to most of these boys it's a profession at all. It's just a preparation for big business or a better start in politics—it's just an attractive living!"

"You are exaggerating, dear. Because, if young people, like you and Francis, don't maintain the old order, who is going to? And it must go on. I haven't finished with this Mr. Blaisdell yet. I begin to remember him now. I can recall his eyes, cloudy looking, and a most unpleasant mouth."

"His mouth is unhappy," said Felicia calmly. "Awful lips. Look as if they were padded."

"I shouldn't care to state it that way, dear. But it is quite clear that we are not interested. I am sure that your brother sees nothing of him now."

"Oh, of all people in the world, please don't quote Francis to me!" said the girl suddenly. "He has a way of dropping his aquaintances. I don't know that it's any reason why I should. Quite the contrary."

"Our men have better opportunities of judging than we, Felicia."

The girl stired impatiently in her seat.

"Nonsense! Mother, do you remember my coming-out party?"

"When I wore my ashes-of-roses silk and opened the dance with Colonel Waring? Of course, child. And only three months after that he followed your dear father! It seems like yesterday."

"Just so. But it wasn't yesterday. I was eighteen then, and I'm most two and twenty now. And sometimes it seems to me, too, that the days slip past."

There fell a sudden silence then in the long parlor. Felicia, a little quizzical and restless, gazed quietly at her mother and very firm was the set of mouth and chin. Girl and woman were quite unlike; the elder had graciousness and dignity, but nothing of the younger's half mischievous, half irritable wit and daring. The girl was good to look at; dainty, like her mother, but of a more provocative and alluring type—less easy to read. There was the same decided chin, but the lips above were fuller, and more mobile than those others could ever have been. The mother's forehead was high and austere, the eyes clear and pale. But the girl's was a frownless brow, low and broad, and the eyes were as richly dark just then as blue-fringed gentians. She carried herself gallantly; at once assured and merry and free. Yet, for all the difference of temperament and feature, there leaped out, in that moment, the deep resemblance between the two. Tenacious will, beginning to understand the nature and quality of the opposing forces, looked

out from each face, across the center table. Mrs. Morland broke the pause.

"You grant then, dear, that he is an untamed, unperceptive sort of person." She looked around her. "Isn't he out of place in this old room?"

"That doesn't trouble me, mother. I'm tired of the old life, the old ways. I've been brought up on the ideas of that old Boston that Grandmother Otis used to tell of; the Boston that heard William Warren and Mrs. Vincent and Annie Clarke at the Museum, but wouldn't go to a play anywhere else—and sat under Starr King in Hollis Street, and Dr. Putnam at the First Church out here and learned to dance at Papanti's—the Boston that was so sure it was liberal and so unconscious that it was provincial. I'm weary of that complacent, respectable Boston, Mother, and I'm not going to be a part of it! Francis and I laugh at it; we can't help it. Everybody nowadays has a sense of humor, and it does seem as if life took itself so seriously then! Really, it is irresistibly funny to think of Emerson and Margaret Fuller platonizing with one another! If they had really met life they couldn't have been so certain about it." She moved restlessly in her chair. "I want to get away from it all. And that's just the reason why I like Dick Blaisdell —because he isn't our sort!"

"You will have to explain that to me, daughter. Understand that I am not blaming you. I know that you do not realize how bitter it is to me to hear you say these things."

"My goodness! I thought I'd spent the last five minutes explaining it. Please realize, Mother, that I'm twenty-two, a woman grown. I know what I'm doing; I know what makes you dislike Dick Blaisdell. He shows what he is. But that's just why I want him to come. He hasn't known how to take what Harvard has to give. Don't you think it's people like us who might see that he gets it? He's never had his chance! There is so much in Cambridge that it's easy enough for a Francis Morland 2nd to get, but

Dick Blaisdell came on here from New York and Alice says his father's business is the wholesale manufacture of sporting goods. I don't suppose that means much background or many inherited helps. Cambridge certainly doesn't make it easy for such as he to get and find the best, and I feel to be nice to him."

Mrs. Morland continued to look very patiently at her daughter.

"If you really suppose, my dear, that these are the reasons why you like the young man to call—— But I cannot think you misunderstand yourself as completely as the reasons you are offering would indicate."

"All right, then, Mother; I'll go on and say the rest of it. You've often told me I was like Grandmother Otis," glancing up at the portrait above the chimney-piece. "Well, what did she do? She went down to Newport with Grandfather and nailed up the notices of Channing's meetings while the crowd hooted and jeered at her from behind. She didn't sit still and wait for life! she wasn't afraid of being a little unconventional; she went out to meet it. What did you and father do when he was called to the colors? Did you stay behind? You know very well you went down to the battlefields and made a home behind the lines for him and his brother officers. You didn't let fear make your fate. You weren't afraid of life; you went out to meet it. Mother, I'm Grandmother Otis' daughter and your daughter, too, and I mean to go out and meet life as you did. I'm not going to be shut up. I'm not going to be! I care nothing about the boy in the way you mean. But I wouldn't be afraid to face that I might care; and, what's more, I'm not afraid to tell you so!"

The older woman's hands began to tremble at that reference to the war; an answering fire lit, for a moment, in her pale face, then sank and vanished. She laid her paper quietly on the table.

"We will not discuss it any further. Except that I must remind you that it was for our officers, not privates, that I

felt called to go to the South. No one knows better than I that the old order changes and that you must make your own life as we made ours. But we did not break with our past; we revered it and carried it forward. There was something I could not quite make out in the way you spoke about your brother a moment ago. Are you worried about him? Is there anything wrong with Francis?"

Another momentary silence; then:

"Anything wrong with Francis? Of course there isn't. Except that I'd like to tell him, like a dutiful sister, what I think of him because he comes to see you so seldom!"

"He puzzles me, Felicia; I don't quite understand your brother. I can't say how I brood over you and Francis. We have been talking about the past—I want to see all the heritage, all the pride and valor and achievement come down to my children. Sometimes in him it seems as if it had slipped away, dissipated with the years. Perhaps that is why I dwell so much on the old days. Your father was taken from me a good many years ago; we hadn't a large fortune to begin with, and after the war there was a good deal less, and you and Francis have been my all. There have been times when I have rebelled that you should have to live so quietly here with me, but"—and her near-sighted eyes seemed to search the old room and dwell upon its simple shabbiness, its worn and sober dignity—"there is something better than gold that we kept undimmed for our children, and for theirs after them. That is why I want you to prize the past; not many have such a heritage as yours! It carries its own obligations. The time is coming when you will be grateful to me for, so often, reminding you of that!"

"Obligations to what, Mother? To fold my hands and wait?"

"Not to try to force issues by stepping outside your own circle. Your hour will not come that way. But when it does come, then, I want you and Francis to live, as we did, without fear and without reserves. We gave what we had to give together; we didn't count the cost. We could, be-

cause we were among our own. Francis *is* his son, our son! I ought not to let any fear or any distrust enter my thoughts about him!"

She stopped abruptly; the girl had listened quietly, as one considering somewhat and removed. She dropped a light kiss, now, on the lined forehead.

"Don't worry about Francis, Mother; he knows that he carries on the name. It is always the boy that counts, isn't it?"

"Yes!" said the elder woman swiftly; "his father's son would have to serve and lead his country, somewhere. And yet——"

"No, Mother, not to-night! No more of that! And look, it's all but eight o'clock! It's a wonder that boy isn't here now. Up you go!"

Felicia heard the door-bell before they reached the top of the stairs. She settled her mother by the fire, with the davenport at hand. Mrs. Morland looked about the old chamber, the faded, sprigged paper, the rusty bell-rope, the little marble mantel and the cheery grate, the portrait over it, with the crimson sword-sash hung athwart the frame.

"Poor Ellen! I know well how she feels to-night." Her eyes rested on her husband's picture. "See, Felicia; Colonel Waring and Captain Gorham have both joined him, now. Do you think he knows?"

"Yes, yes; dear Mother. Yes, I'm sure. Don't fail to give my love to Miss Ellen; say everything for me that you'd like me to say. And now——"

"One thing, dear, before you leave me. You will not let this boy stay very long?"

"All right, dear, all right. But you simply must begin your writing and let me get downstairs. I heard him come ten minutes ago, and that means he thinks he's been waiting half an hour!"

She ran out of the room, sped down the staircase, and entered the old drawing-room where Richard Blaisdell, heavy, thick-set, with questioning mouth and half bold, half sombre eyes, was standing up to greet her.

II

"NONE SO BLIND"

"Do look at that fire," she cried; "why, it's nearly out! You'll have to help me build it up." While Dick bent over the scuttle, she sank lightly into the old, winged chair. "There!" she concluded cheerfully, as the soft coal leaped into sputtering flame. "Now, let's sit close to it. When a man pokes a fire, something comes of it!"

"That'll burn all right, now," said the boy. "You just have to get the knack of it, you know!" He cocked his head slightly to one side and looked at her with a sudden flicker of his eyelid, as though admitting her to some shrewd confidence. "If a chap can't give first aid to the injured to a dying fire, a College dorm is no place for him!"

It was an unhappy, if innocent, mannerism, that wink. She fancied he'd caught it in the prosperous business circles of his father. In her dislike of it, it fascinated her; it was always the advance signal of some particularly obvious or characteristic remark.

He settled his heavy figure comfortably into the arm-chair across the chimney piece, crossed his legs and reached into his coat pocket.

"You don't mind if I smoke?"

Felicia's eyes widened slightly.

"I'm really afraid there aren't any ash-trays handy——"

"Oh?" He looked about the room. "Well, I guess it wouldn't just fit in here. Sorry."

"In short," she said merrily, "we must begin, at least, by being dull and virtuous. My dear Mr. Blaisdell, this is the first time I've seen you since you became a Senior. Do tell me what new courses you are taking!"

"You needn't rag me that way," he said with sudden irritation. "It isn't so awfully funny. I guess the question's soon going to be, what new courses will keep on taking me! Honestly, I haven't done a stroke of work this year—simply can't concentrate. I don't know if I ever can settle down to do anything. I really came over to-night to talk to you about it."

The faintest smile moved Felicia's lips.

"Most women know that all men are lazy," she said sweetly; "but for just which of your instructors are you displaying it?"

"Oh, I have Fine Arts I, but that's merely first steps for little feet! I can get through that all right. Then there's an absolutely rotten course under old Barrett——"

"'Old Barrett?' Good heavens! You don't mean Percy? I should say, Dr. Percy Barrett, M.A., Ph.D.! Why, he's not eight and twenty!"

"Well the Lord had a prof. in mind when He made him, then! I guess he was born old. One scholastic snob, I'll call him! He doesn't ever forget, nor let you forget, that he was 'born in Boston, educated at Harvard,' and, I suppose sometime they'll 'bury him at Mt. Auburn.' He's just flunked me in his fall exam. But I jolly well got even with him, this afternoon!"

"What delicious gossip! And about Percy Barrett—of all men! M.A., Ph.D.! Whatever did you do to him?"

"Oh, I met him in the Yard. He was standing on the steps of Mathews, looking down his nose with that coolly intelligent glance of his—you know he cultivates the calm and straight and steady——"

"He does make those shell glasses of his look as though they were pluperfect peep-holes into infinity! How you do love him! What happened?"

"I had to pass him on the way up to my room. He saw me coming and just stood there and gave me the once-over—trim and sure and easy-like, you know. 'Ah, good afternoon, Blaisdell,' said he. 'How d'do, sir!' said I. Then

he went on, in the sort of a voice that would make the North Pole seem warm, 'Perhaps you'd like to hear from your French test? I take it you put not too much time into it?' 'No, sir,' said I cheerfully; 'I didn't. I expect you gave me an E!' That got him! 'Your expectation will not be disappointed,' said he. And then he lost his temper. 'Why don't you get one of the underclassmen to coach you? Your room-mate, for instance. He did very well.'" A sort of darkness had crept over the boy's eyes as though he still felt the light lash of that cool voice. He twisted his chin about over his collar, like an unruly horse. "Damn him!" he exploded. "It'll be some time before I forgive him that! My room-mate!"

"Painful and frequent and free," murmured the girl. "Hardly Victorian——"

"My language? Why can't you talk with a girl like you do with anybody else!"

"There's no doubt you can. Especially if the girl wants to be talked to as if she were just like anybody else!"

"That's the trouble with the whole place!" he said sullenly. "Everyone tries to bring you to book. I won't be!" Then with a sudden change of mood, "I'm—I'm sorry if I offended."

"Not at all," she said cordially; "I quite enjoy it; it certainly gets over!"

"I don't think of you," stubbornly, "as like everybody else, you very well know that! But I believe in taking people as they really are."

"So do I," she agreed. "If only they know how to show what they really are. I fancy you've succeeded in doing that with Dr. Barrett?"

"You can bet I came back at him! I'd sooner have been expelled and sent home than not have answered him, then! I just gazed down the Yard for a minute and then turned and looked right at him and said, quite slowly: 'Thanks for the reference to my roommate. He'll be glad to hear that he's got a good mark; he likes that sort of thing. But I

guess I won't need to bother him. I don't care a particle whether I passed your course or not!'"

"Dick Blaisdell, you never said such a thing!"

"I certainly did!"

Little spots of color burned in Felicia's cheeks. Her eyes were as brilliant and as dark as those in the old portrait above her; as the boy looked at her, never moving, he seemed to be drawing nearer. She settled herself, luxuriously, in the deep chair and reached delicately for the candy box. "I'd like to see you two together—— But I dare say I shall. Dr. Percy Barrett, M.A., Ph.D., sometimes calls here of a Tuesday night."

"Here! Oh, I say! Do you really know him?" He looked at her intently. "Is—is this Tuesday?"

"Know him? Oh, rather! His father and my grandfather were cousins. We've always known him. And yes, dear Mr. Blaisdell," she regarded him impishly, "this is Tuesday. Honestly, I shouldn't be surprised to have him come now!"

The boy glowered at her, his mouth again sullen.

"Say, for G——, for the love of Mike, is there anybody who was born in this town who doesn't know everybody else in it? I never saw such a place!"

"Like a close corporation," she said pleasantly. "Hard for those outside to get in, and, perhaps, for those inside to get out."

The boy looked at her intently; then he gave a short laugh, and shook his shoulders.

"Huh! Let him come. I'll bet I won't mind it any more than he will——" Again he glanced at her intently. "He isn't here now, anyway. Just my rotten luck! I dare say you admire him?"

"Oh, immensely!" she said sweetly. "Immensely."

"I think you might stop kidding me! If you only knew how I hate the college and the fool courses, and, oh, just everything generally!"

"You *are* blue to-night, aren't you? What's the matter,

Mr. Blaisdell? You don't really hate the college. Of course you want to pass the course!"

"I don't give a continental whether I pass it or not! Or any others, either. I'm sick of the whole place. No one can fool me any longer about college life. Darn little I've seen of it! Harvard doesn't know anything or care anything about me! I'd like to get out of it. Lots of other fellows feel the same way, too. It's not our fault!"

The girl's figure stiffened a little.

"Naturally the blame doesn't lie with yourself!"

"No, it doesn't! Oh, I'm not just 'knocking'! You and —and people like your brother—don't know what it's like for the rest of us, over there. I'll never forget my freshman year! Started out, you know, believing in everything and everybody. Poor simp! No one at home really knew anything about the place and I didn't know myself and after I got here I couldn't find out. No one paid any attention to me. I just knew that I didn't understand it, that I was, oh, miles, miles out of it! I guess you can't catch on to how a man feels when he knows that everything is upside down and wrong. He just falls back on sticking it out; he won't tell, and he won't show, and he won't care. I was in Weld that year—you know that dorm because your—your brother had the room next to mine. Well, after the first weeks when every fellow talked a bit with every other one, and we were all green and shy and bewildered together, why, after that I just didn't hardly see any one. I'd have made friends with freaks, or grinds even, I was so lonely. I was way up in Weld—you know, on the fifth floor—and no one, just no one came to my room. I began to feel as though it were a cage that closed in on me. You remember that open well of the staircase with the big skylight at the top—that sort of gap that goes from the top to the bottom of the building? Well, sometimes when I'd come in tired or depressed—or anything—I'd climb up to my door and look down and it seemed

as if that space was all ready, waiting—as if it sort of expected you and knew that one day you'd jump into it. There were days when I just liked to brood and brood over it. It seemed as if I had to."

He stopped abruptly, a little shamefaced. And yet, for all the half furtive enjoyment of that recital he looked bitter, something of the tragic hopelessnes of youth flashed up, for a moment, in his eyes. The girl, surprised and startled, had gone white, her face set like a tiny mask of wonderment.

"I can't understand it! How could you possibly think it was worth while!"

"Think?" he said sombrely. "You don't think at times like that!"

"Then, if it's as bad as that," she said slowly. "It isn't just the college that disappoints you. It's some person that you've—you've lost faith in."

She felt his instant withdrawal behind a stolid and impenetrable reserve. But she went on:

"You see I know, too, that those are the things which hurt most in life——"

He looked up, dumbly, then.

"Well, there was a fellow I—I believed in. I thought he liked me. One day when I was going up to my room—No! I ought not to. I can't——"

"You met some one?"

"Oh, it was this man. I'd thought I'd known him pretty well the first weeks of that year. We'd had supper together at the *Touraine,* the night after the torchlight parade——"

"The same man who had supper with you, that night! Did—did you like that fellow?"

"Pretty well—no, that's bluffing! I liked him awfully. Well, this day there were some other men with him, and I nodded and called out to him. He went by just as if I weren't there. It didn't sink in right off that he'd done it on purpose, and it didn't hurt much just then. I was just

phased and angry. But when I got over being angry and began to realize it——"

"Then you wanted to jump—differently from those other days when you just liked to think that you wanted to?"

"It was too different. I longed to do it and that's the worst of it. Because I didn't. I couldn't—I didn't dare. What that day told me about him and what it showed me about myself broke something inside. It broke and—and I can't get it mended. But there's no use telling you. I don't know why I'm doing it—we'd better drop it."

"I suppose it is all part of 'being a freshman,' isn't it?" said the girl softly. "Yes, let's drop it—at least for now. Tell me about your room-mate."

He was nonplussed for a moment, cruelly rebuked by that quick acceptance. It made him truculent, savage.

"I'm not whining, you understand! It may sound so—but I guess sometimes you may be really suffering even if you do stoop to pity yourself a little! Not, of course, that you'd know anything about that! And don't think for a moment that I feel that way today. I'm well over it!"

"No," said Felicia contemplatively. "I can quite see that you don't feel much of anything now-a-days! Come, please don't be foolish! Don't you know that I understand that this was probably the reason why you took on a first year man?" And then, seeing the shadow deepening on his face, she swiftly concluded, "Not, of course, that he realizes it! I suppose he just takes everything for granted!"

"He certainly does that!" grimly.

"Not that it's surprising——" she pursued calmly, "I wonder what there is that a man won't take that way. Do you suppose there ever was one of you who was a really appreciative human being?"

"Huh!" said Dick, "I don't say we're sentimental like girls. But there's more than one way of noticing what's being done for you, and he doesn't know any of them."

He surveyed her calmly. "He sure isn't what you'd call appreciative; that's certain—as regards our rooming together, I think he hates it. I don't know that I blame him. It's not quite fair——" he added slowly. "Still, I don't know that I blame him."

"How a man can change in the course of an evening! Who ever before saw one so humble! Well, I'm quite sure I don't agree with you. He ought to think himself lucky to have an upper-classman on hand to help him get started."

"That was one reason why I signed up with him," said the boy slowly. "But I know, now, there were others. It's queer, but some of them I didn't realize until after I got him. Yet I knew they were there all the time."

"Is this metaphysics, or do you just call it plain psychology?" she laughed. "Do come down where I am!" She paused. "What's really the matter with your roommate?"

"You see," said Dick and stopped, "you see——"

"I used to know his cousin Archie," she observed; "thought rather well of himself, it seemed. Is Phil like that?"

"It's not—not a very pleasant story," said the boy. "I'm not what they call 'good,' you understand."

"No? Of course that's why we think you're interesting?"

He flushed a dull and painful red at that. His big hand with its wide-spread stubby fingers, clenched and unclenched upon his knee. She didn't like his hands, but they fascinated her, as if they were strong in the wrong places. He wore a ring, a large cut seal, mounted in wrought gold, upon his little finger. "Suitable for an alderman!" she thought. A shining cigarette-case protruded from his waistcoat pocket. Why would this sort of boy plaster himself all over with jewelry? She minded that more than his vocabulary. As long as he tried to be careful as to his language, whether he succeeded or not didn't matter. And no doubt there was something he really wanted to talk about; one could be sure of that from the half sullen, half

wistful humility with which he was now continuing. She liked that. Yes; there was something attractive about him.

"I didn't say that to be cocky. It—it partly explains about Phil. You see, he's Archie Moffat's cousin. That's how I knew him. And he's frightfully young—seventeen, I think—and honestly, I thought that very likely I could be of some use to him. Anyhow, he wouldn't have to be absolutely and entirely alone. But that wasn't all; I was pretty selfish in it too; I wanted to get something from him. I wanted comradeship, interest, admiration. Men—most men, anyway—can't live without being liked and believed in, and having——" Again he turned to Felicia and paused. There was a little involuntary movement of the hands so lightly crossed upon her lap. He seemed so near across the chimney-piece. "And having affection," he concluded, gazing with unconscious sombreness at her, "I wanted some one to be good to me."

He fell into another pause at that and the crackling of the fire was suddenly audible. Felicia could hear a tiny singing in her ears. When she spoke it was in the softest, most sympathetic voice; no one could have been more gentle or more impersonal.

"I think that's rather fine myself, and I don't see why he shouldn't. I should think he'd have liked it."

"Yes; but"—he had leaned his face upon his hands so that it was hidden from her. When he spoke again there was flatness in his tone, something cynical and artificial—"but I'm a failure, you know." He laughed uncomfortably, then repeated the phrase, lashing himself with a sort of bitter relish. "I'm a failure. I've lost out in college; I haven't 'done' anything or 'made' anything. I said to myself that I was going to keep him from doing that. But one day I thought 'Then why in heaven's name did you let him room with you?' I saw then that I'd made another mess of it, that the one thing I ought to have done was to have steered clear of him. I—I did like him and heaven knows I wanted him to like me. But after that

I couldn't forget that, all the time, I was probably just a drag. It—it made me hate him every time I looked at him! In his way! I couldn't stand that! It almost seemed as if I wanted to hurt him after that! God! I am unhappy!"

"But, surely, he doesn't feel that way about you?"

"No. But he despises me."

"Just for that!"

"Oh, no! He's not been here long enough to realize anything one way or the other about that. But he knows me, now. And that's worse!"

"But I don't quite see. You certainly aren't the sort of person who'd naturally provoke indifference. I'd think that if you set out to do it you could almost make any one like you. And you did set out to, didn't you?" But again there fell that pause like the dropping of lock gates, the strained leashing of the would-be betraying speech. And again that impersonal yet persuasive voice went on. "See," she said, "if you were always like this, direct and vigorous, I should think a good many things might be forgotten and forgiven in the course of a semester."

He turned on her a miserable face.

"That's the worst of it. I'm not always like this. Now-a-days I'm hardly ever like this. Why," he said with slow surprise, his questioning eyes fixed on hers, "I don't know that I was ever like this before. It's something you've done to me!"

"Nonsense!" said Felicia hastily, "was there ever anything to equal the simplicity of a man's imagination! That's no reason!"

"No," said Dick, "maybe not." Again he paused and looked at her. "Just the same, it's true. But the trouble with Phil is that I've let go so long and so often that there's no use bluffing it any more. He's just through with me." Once more he turned in desperate honesty toward her, and suddenly, as if they had just appeared, she noticed the faint rims under his eyes, the tiny trembling of the hand

upon his knee. "Miss Morland, I don't think I ought to talk to you like this. But I do want to get it off my chest to some one. You'll be awfully fed up if I get started with it. I—I don't think your brother'd like it very much. I guess I'd better tell you that I don't see—anything of him now-a-days. He'd call it cheeky."

The girl was gazing, wide-eyed, at a distant corner of the room.

"Of course it isn't cheeky. Do see that ottoman over there! Was there ever anything so dusty!" Her eyes came back to him for a moment. "I knew you and Francis had rather missed connections of late. But I wouldn't think that"—a new inflection crept into her voice—"any reason why I shouldn't add to an already extended knowledge of the vagaries of freshmen!"

Something in that light phrase chilled him. On the very edge of his confession he drew back. The male in him flashed out in jealous and secretive pride.

"You—you're just leading me on—you're just letting me do it! I should like to know why! What's the reason? It—it isn't curiosity, as you said it was, is it? Why do you do it?"

"Well," said the girl steadily, "I am curious in a way. It's not curiosity of the odious sort. If I didn't like and believe in you," she went on with conscious dignity, while he gazed wonderingly at her, "I shouldn't be curious at all. I'd refuse to hear or to know. But I'm tired of being told by the boys the things they think I ought to hear, and I'm tired of men's saying what is expected of them, just pretending to feel and to be what they think I think is proper. It makes me furious that they should think we're so stupid that we don't see through them! Life, real life, interests me too. I don't mean to be kept outside of it any longer. Why can't a girl be a comrade sometimes like anybody else I'm not afraid to know——"

The boy looked at her hungrily, as from some immeasurable distance. His face set.

"Then—then I'm going to tell you. I'm just going to. Do—do you think it's—it's absolutely inexcusable in anyone to—to drink?"

"I don't know," she said lightly. "I never tried it. Do you drink—much?"

"That's—that's why Phil despises me! And that's what makes me fear and despise myself. It's his attitude toward me that makes me see what—what I must be like when I come in drunk. I'm only twenty-three. But I love it. I didn't used to—I couldn't bear the taste and smell of it. But I wanted what it would do to me. It made me feel like myself again, happy and confident and free and full of power—power! It—it does that while—while you're in it. But now I love the thing itself! It's like being a beast, now!" He almost broke down through sheer nervous tension. "I oughtn't to have said all this. It's just touching bottom to tell a thing like that to you. I'll get out and get away——"

He rose and would have run or stumbled from the room. But she laid her hand upon his arm.

"Please sit down," she said, and there was no possible resistance to that friendly voice.

"It's no use," he said thickly, "I'd no business to tell you! I'm a brute as well as a fool. Nothing can come of it. It makes me hate myself more—and you couldn't understand, anyway!"

"Why couldn't I understand?" she said quickly.

"Because girls don't like the same things men do—I've noticed that. Your whole life, this old house, the way you've been brought up—it must make you despise people who are self-indulgent—and who break conventions."

"I'm not so terribly shocked. Even though I do live in 'this old house'! But I don't see how you can do it—how you can do it when you think of your home! Haven't you told your father?"

"Dad! I should say not! He'd only be thinking that he was disgraced—not that I'm ditched! Always kicking

as it is about my marks or expenses or something. He doesn't trust me!"

"You think that because you know you aren't trustable! The boys who are 'straight,' as you call it, don't feel that way about their own people."

"Most of them keep right just because they've never wanted to do anything else! Or haven't dared! Just half alive! Of course," he went on defensively, "there are—are some things I wouldn't do. I—don't go the limit like some of the rest of them——"

But his voice trailed off into silence. Her cheeks were flushing, something a little hard crept into her eyes, she looked, suddenly, like her mother. She ignored those final sentences, but there was an added note of distance in her voice.

"That's the one mean thing you've said to-night. Because you know it isn't true! There are hundreds of them every year—boys who have some pride and self-respect. Certainly they—they behave themselves, just as a high matter of course, because *there is more than themselves to think of,* and they remember that and keep on doing it. How much have you cared about *us,*" she concluded in a whisper, *"us?"*

"I don't think I know what you mean," he stammered, "I'm not their kind."

"I know you're not our kind," she flashed out jealously, "I should think that was clear enough!"

"That isn't fair," he said. "You're being mean, now. You're like the rest of them! I am your kind. It's what I want; I wouldn't be talking to you if it wasn't! I'm not just frightened and I'm not just pitying myself. I'm *ashamed.* Can't you understand? Don't you see that I want to be myself again? I am your kind. There are some things that are real enough to me, though I'm just finding it out, things I wouldn't dare to talk to you about to-night. I'm as proud of them as you are! Only I know it's too late! Oh, it makes me sick to talk, sick; I can't!"

The doorbell tinkled, faintly and unheeded, in the distant kitchen. She sat up straightly now in the old, winged chair, sincerely moved by his suffering, enthralled with the sense of some noble power over him. She felt herself perfectly safe yet playing the highest and most fascinating of all rôles. What could not a sympathetic and understanding girl do for these men who yielded themselves so utterly, if they yielded at all! She bent toward him, suffused with generous emotion, quite sure and confident.

"You are a silly boy, aren't you!"

"I'm tired of being played with; I don't know what you mean."

"Silly not to believe in yourself. Silly not to see that other people believe and care."

His glance, fixed on the ground, wandered toward her.

"Who cares?"

"Phil would care and—any of us who know you would care now."

"No one can ever respect me again!"

"Yes, they can; because you're suffering under it. You want to get away from being lonely, don't you—well, give your real self a chance; the you that is lonely can't be satisfied with—with gay life and drink."

"I know it!"

"Then you'll have to find some other way, won't you?"

"What way is there? Have you got a way for me?"

She drew back a little.

"You'll have to begin with your room-mate. You'll have to do it for him because you did take him for a room-mate. Mr. Blaisdell, you've got to make that up to him somehow; you've got to make him see that he was lucky after all to have you. You can do that—you understand a lot about life and you can help him. You do understand and you can help!"

"Do you really think so?"

"I know it; I know it! I've absolute faith in you. Won't you try?"

He looked up dumbly.

"No woman," he said slowly in a whisper, "no woman ever told me before that she had faith in me."

Her serene assurance crumbled a little under that.

"But I have," she endeavored to say lightly. "So you will try?"

His eyes clung, with a dreadful steadfastness, to her face. "Yes," he said thickly. And then after a pause, in a slightly clearer voice, "Yes, I'm going to try."

That moment there sounded a discreet knock upon the door. Felicia heard the maid's voice saying: "Dr. Barrett, please, Miss Morland." A moment afterward Percy entered.

He was spotless and perfect in appointment and pleasantly conscious that it was a later hour than anyone not somewhat privileged would have ventured to call. He had that double consciousness belonging to his type, the secretly prized faculty of standing apart from himself and watching what he did. He looked on now, so to speak, at what he quite justly felt was a dignified and quiet entrance with just its own suspicion of eagerness. It was meant to impress—for, after all, he was coming from the University—yet while impressing, subtly to flatter and to please. But it was a distinct shock, and what was more, rather disconcerting to see Blaisdell, of all people, rise from the fireside. And the boy looked so powerful to-night. How he hated these crude, elemental chaps! There was, to the discerning, something repellant in the sheer bulk of their presence and personality. He stiffened to meet the quickly felt intimacy of the atmosphere. There was a cold glint of challenge in his eyes as he looked from the senior to Felicia.

She felt something of relief at his appearance, but, whatever looked out from her eyes, no living being, least of all these men, could have deciphered. She was gracious and ready and most terribly at ease. Perhaps a more wary and less complacent doctor would have thought her a shade too bland.

"Dear me," she exclaimed, "how very nice to see you! This must be Cambridge's calling night! Do you, by any chance, know Mr. Blaisdell?"

Percy's voice was troubling him. To his infinite annoyance it seemed necessary to clear his throat a little.

"Oh, yes," he said. There was almost a still truculence in his tone; it seemed as if the girl's eyebrows lifted just a trifle as she caught it. "Oh, yes, I know Mr. Blaisdell. I have the good fortune to teach him." For a moment the immeasurable distance between an undergraduate and a young instructor seemed to expand the room.

"Really," said Felicia innocently, "then what a fortunate meeting! You must know each other so very well. Teachers," she said lightly, turning to Dick, "are like parents, dangerous because they see so much they don't say anything about! And pupils, too," she added, looking cordially at Percy, "have such an unerring eye for the engaging weaknesses as well as the amazing learning of their instructors!"

"What the devil brought him here tonight," thought Percy.

"She's on my side," thought Dick, "she's on my side! She's got his number!" He spoke up, easily and clearly, with boyish dignity.

"I must say good night, Miss Morland. You—you know what this evening's meant to me. I don't know how," his disconcerting eyes burned into hers, "to thank you. You'll let me come again, soon?"

"Yes, indeed," said Felicia, cordial and impersonal again. "Do!"

III

The tension eased as the outer door closed; Percy could see more clearly with that inward eye of his that was watching her. Every instinct in him was on the defensive. He was savage with himself for having come; equally determined, being there, to master the situation. He understood her impeccable cordiality, an obscure resentment against her sex and her stirring within him. Women thought they were so sure of men! A mere girl so certain of herself; it perturbed while it annoyed him, and so angered him the more. So he stood there straight and still, something that at any moment might become cynical, even vindictive, lurking behind the cool, gray eyes. But there was irreproachable deference of manner.

With a twinge of delicious fear Felicia felt the hostility; half resented, half enjoyed it. She looked suddenly older, became dangerously radiant, a sort of suppressed energy making every glance and gesture significant. Did these men presume to quarrel over her? As if they were not her own especial and immemorial game! Above the chimney-piece the dark eyes of Grandmother Otis gazed out from behind the veil; the girl flashed an inscrutable glance at the old picture as though claiming the comprehending comradeship of sex. So he meant to know whether instructor or pupil came first? Well, she would punish and baffle him for permitting her to see that he thought either of them might be so high in her esteem! Men did think well of themselves! There was something deadly in the perfection of her friendliness toward him as that thought crossed her mind.

She smiled happily at him.

"How very warm the room is! Take that big chair, and do pull it away from the coals. Why is it that whenever you ask a boy to mend the fire he always thinks you want to start a conflagration?"

"Have you been finding it too warm? I think you were sitting by it."

"And quite toasted in consequence. Besides, that's a man's chair; you wouldn't be comfortable in that small one. I'm going to sit over here by pussy on the couch. It's so nice to have something near at hand to pet!"

"Cats certainly like it," he said evenly, "but they don't care much about the one that does it."

"I know it," sweetly, "just like boys, aren't they? Not in love with you, but in love with loving."

"Which is at least one point in which they differ from men!"

"They certainly are quite different," she conceded. "Not that I think they're any more interested in themselves than men are—only more frank and less solemn about it. But, dear me, how long it seems since we've seen you. Not since Cornelia Farrington's wedding breakfast. Didn't lack for stateliness, did it? Though Lucy thought poor Corny's mother-in-law's dress was calculated to make the judicious grieve. How I did shiver in that windy cavern of a house!"

"One must expect to pay something for living on the water side of Beacon Street," said Percy shortly. "That sort of function finds me cold, to begin with."

"Not appropriate to your new rôle of guide and tutor to the young? You know, I shall never get used to your having deserted the paternal offices in State Street for the chairs of learning in the Yard! But do tell me how that—don't you call it a 'monograph'—is getting on?"

"Oh, slowly. I'm still collecting material for it. One ought to read everything extant from the period to make it exhaustive, you know. The Library is especially rich in our Department, so I'm not much more than half way through."

"It must take a tremendous amount of time. But, of

course, it'll be an awfully important contribution! Listen, Bob," she cried, lifting the surprised and sleepy kitten and dropping it in her lap. "'The Early Use of the French Aorist'—it quite subdues me! Do you know," candidly, "I don't see how you manage to do all your teaching and correcting along with this minute research work, too."

There was a thread of cruelty in the soft voice. Could Dick have seen her then he would have wondered if this were the girl he thought he knew. Percy was watching her narrowly, but he had little imagination. Besides, as he once told his class, he believed that "only second-rate men are diffident." He meant to analyze this situation he had stumbled upon; that, and courage and resource, would carry him through. So he answered steadily:

"It is an almost impossible task. Although many of the best men enjoy teaching underclassmen, too. Only, I wish the college would recognize some division of labor and let those of us, who want to produce, give ourselves to it. Instead of which they've saddled me with a course in Elementary French!"

Felicia was talking softly to the kitten. "Velvet paws, Bob; velvet paws!" She looked up. "Oh, yes, I've heard of it. Isn't that the one Dick Blaisdell is taking?"

There was a perceptible pause, then:

"He's in it for the moment; it's not clear how much longer he'll be there."

"Then he's not what you'd call 'able'?" brightly.

"He's so extremely lazy that I wouldn't care to say whether he were able or not. But with a boy so, so obtuse, I'd doubt it."

"How very interesting! Do you know, I shouldn't have thought of him as being 'obtuse' exactly."

"I'm doubtless wrong, then. I dare say you know him better than do I."

"Yes," serenely, "I wouldn't wonder if I do. Of course he seems to me like most undergraduates. By the way, what do you think Jack's doing? He's looking up in the college directory the different cities represented by men in his and

Francis' class, and proposing to create, on the spot, a friendship with at least one man from each of them! He announced to Mother the other day that he was tired of New Englanders and wanted to know some Americans as well. You should have seen her face! Then he quite finished her by adding that he was sick of being a Bostonian, and also wanted to become a human being! He's actually planning to call on every fellow on his list and say 'How'do: my name's Jack Trowbridge. Unfortunately, I was born in Boston, but I see you're from Tombstone, Arizona (or Walla-Walla, Washington). I say, let's get acquainted!' Isn't that delicious? There's so much sense in their nonsense! Really, I should think it would be great fun to teach them—easier, perhaps, than summing them up——"

"Thank you so much," said Percy crisply. "I suppose many of them are amusing boys. Perhaps I'm too near them in age to enjoy them."

"Oh, hardly that!"

"At any rate, I didn't take my degree in order to put them through language drilling. If I'd wanted that I should have gone to some secondary school as soon as I'd graduated. It's a mistake for the University to be doing what properly belongs to the meagre equipment of the small college."

"Heavens!" said Felicia. "You talk as if you were a hundred! Please don't go on like that: it makes me feel as if we had just *nothing* in common! Do you think that the—the lazy and obtuse Dick is also merely an 'amusing boy'?"

"We were talking of your Cousin Jack," said Percy stiffly.

"I know," calmly. "But I think Mr. Blaisdell and Jack are quite alike in some respects."

"I fancy your cousin would be more surprised than pleased to hear it! One may infer some difference in their background, to say nothing of their college standing!"

"But look at the terrible directness of them! They're positively twins there! When either of them wants anything he just goes right for it. But perhaps you don't like men of action?"

"I don't dislike them—not at all. Certainly most women, though, rate physical energy and executive ability higher than I do. I think they're a bit dazzled by it—at first. Personally I distrust it. If men act before they think, someone else has to think for them afterward and mend their acts. I'm quite aware how pedantic—and not brilliant—this all sounds. Even so, it seems to me more important just now to teach men to think than to do most anything else. That's why your uncle's teaching in one of the graduate schools, isn't it? And why your father held his honorary degree from another. So perhaps you can understand that even a young man values it."

Felicia settled the kitten, with a truly terrible carefulness, on the couch beside her.

"Thanks," said she, "for the references to the family, and especially for the one to Uncle Trowbridge. It reminds me of what he was quoting only last night, about young instructors. Something he heard the president of Amherst remarking. He said, 'they seem to regard teaching as a process of loading and unloading. They sail up to the docks, some one opens up the hatches, and they pitch in the bricks. Then they sail off to the class room and throw them out again at the heads of the innocent students!' Can't you hear that mild, calm voice of his concluding," she laughed softly, "'The only fortunate thing about it is that so few of them get hit!' I take it Mr. Blaisdell's quite a dodger! Honestly, how near do you ever get with them to anything that's real?"

"I've come near enough to several things that are real tonight," he flashed back. "But not one of them more real than what you're making fun of."

She turned suddenly to him, still flushing but smiling cordially. He felt rather dizzy and, for some reason, dismayed by the swift change of attitude. It made him more self-conscious.

"Did I say anything about the disconcerting directness of the undergraduate? Well, he isn't a circumstance to you,

Percy Barrett! Of course you know I've been funning." She lifted round eyes like a penitent and engaging child. "I think, now, you might explain to me about that French course."

"I don't want to talk about the teaching; I came over here to forget it. I know that girls think that because we're young Ph. D.s, and so queer as actually to enjoy books, and thinking, and writing, that we must be a poor lot. But we're not. We're also human beings. I'm going to make you see that to-night before I go."

She bent over to the table.

"Let me turn that shade a bit. The light is right in our eyes. You're tired, aren't you? It must take the very life and all out of one to teach that sort of men."

"Life! I wish you could see them. They're so hopelessly casual! They just sit there. Perhaps you've worked up some careful phrases or incisive sentences—one-half take them like dumb, driven sheep, the others like cynical and restless devils. I don't know which irritates me more, the easy and vacuous appreciation that some of them put on—that ingratiating smile of the unintelligently alert—or the others who watch you with eyes like gimlets just boring into the deficiencies of your learning, and the idiosyncrasies of your person. I've absolutely lost my faith in lectures; they've begun to sound like an old phonograph record even to me. I can see them flowing mechanically from my lips through their ears and good right arms to find an inky oblivion in their notebooks! If you want to know what it means to teach undergraduates just read what they think you've said to them when their blue books come in!"

He had declaimed it rather well and he knew it; she was genuinely amused. He had gotten into his stride now; she should see that he would direct the rest of the conversation! He resented brains in women, and consequently underrated them. Let them keep to their sex—that was what men wanted.

She kept to it.

"I never heard anything so funny; please go on! Describe some of the boys to me. Do you ever talk to them the way you talk about them?"

"Never fear! They'd be dumbfounded! Well, there's that Monty Ward—He came up to-day and asked about his mark, and when I told him it was a bare pass he looked up with a face as solemn as—as a horse, and said 'Hope springs infernal in the human breast!' Now what are you going to do with a boy like that? I object to this confusing of personal and academic relationships. If I hadn't known the Wards all my life he'd never have dared say it! I simply haven't succeeded yet in keeping a class room absolutely official."

"Why try? Little Monty Ward!" she broke into peals of laughter.

"He'll need all the 'hope' he has before his French course and he get through with each other; that's certain," said Percy grimly.

"Look out!" she said lightly. "Really, this is too wonderful. Who else?"

"I've got one really good man—a boy named Philip Spenser."

"Oh, I know; Archie Moffat's cousin. What's he like?"

"An extremely quiet chap; and fastidious, fastidious even for a freshman. But he's a natural scholar—the class ranker."

"Quiet," said Felicia thoughtfully, "Fastidious—and quiet——"

He shot a sudden question at her:

"Did you know he was rooming with Blaisdell?"

"Is he? I believe he spoke of his roommate, but he only called him by his first name. Your referring to it brings us back to him and Jack, doesn't it! A teacher who understands and observes fellows as you do could certainly do a lot with them."

Percy felt an inward despair; his first taste of man's ageless impotence when confronted by a subtler and more per-

sistent sex. There was really something unscrupulous about women. Well, she should get no smallest satisfaction out of him!

"I don't teach your cousin," he said coldly, "and as for Blaisdell, the college isn't a reformatory; nor are we prep schoolmasters!"

"Oh, is Mr. Blaisdell really *that* sort of a boy? Fancy it! And fancy your telling me!"

"I didn't intend any particular application to Blaisdell," he went on desperately. "I only meant to convey that the college isn't meant to be a super-Sunday School!"

"I imagine that's what he thinks, too! And, partly, because of Spenser. Really, from what you say of him, he must be hard to room with——"

"I shouldn't think Blaisdell would be less so! I must say —if we must talk about them at all—that it would be Spenser who had my sympathy."

"But he wouldn't take it, just as Monty Ward doesn't need it. So, you see, it brings us right back again to Dick Blaisdell. Honestly, since he's been here to-night, and I've seen you two together, I think you could do a lot for him."

"You mean make a scholar of him? The idea's ludicrous!"

"You might be a friend to him—I have a notion he hasn't many."

The knuckles whitened in Percy's hand where it grasped the chair arm.

"Will you be good enough to tell me, Miss Morland, why you are insisting upon this conversation? Why you think that I, of all men, could do anything for him?"

"Goodness, don't you know? It's so obvious! It's because you dislike him so. It was nice of you, wasn't it, when you were both my guests to-night, to let him see it so plainly!"

'I certainly do dislike him! I'm—I'm sorry if I showed it too clearly; I wasn't aware of it. He isn't my sort!"

"That's not why you dislike him."

"Indeed! Perhaps, since you seem to know at least one of us so well, you can tell me what is the reason!"

"It's because you are partly his sort, and partly not. There's something underneath in you that envies him and wants to be like him, and something on top that can't bear his—recklessness, and hates him for it. Stupid! you couldn't hate him if you didn't want to like him too! I wish you'd tell me how long you've known him!"

"How long I've known him? I've only just begun to teach him!"

"But it must be some time that you have known him, just the same. Other boys have flunked in this course and you didn't personalize it. You couldn't over just five weeks of contact in the first semester. It isn't because brains and industry are lacking in him; it's that he, Dick Blaisdell, doesn't take your course seriously. That's what cuts. You must have known him!"

His hand was on his mouth; his eyes, startled, unwavering, like points of steel, fixed on her. He felt done. Was there ever such a girl! Certainly she had some sixth sense; or were these insights the distilled inheritance of family tradition, the cumulative humanities from five generations. This then was what the evening had come to—that he should be asked to tell her of his inward attitude toward Richard Blaisdell! He had never yet told that to himself. Well, perhaps even now, he could wring victory from defeat, if he could be magnanimous and trust her. She certainly was a brilliant girl; the kind one would like to see presiding at one's dinner table. Any one could see what an aid such a woman might be to a man's career. But he wanted her for himself. He was cold toward most women; but this girl, desire stirred within him, whenever he came into her presence. He was glad of that. As for the present situation, perhaps the best way to carry it off was to make a virtue of necessity; accept this interest of her's in Blaisdell and find out what it meant. But it was hard——

"Delighted to tell you what little I know of him," he said

coolly. "I met him three years ago in Malcolm Kennedy's rooms. Kennedy was his Advisor." His voice was unnaturally low and dry; he had to clear it. "He was a curious type to me; a mixture of aggressiveness and awkwardness; his manner assertive, his eyes looking everywhere. But as soon as I entered the room something inside me saw him. I suppose he labeled me 'cool and correct Bostonian'; at any rate he looked strangely at me as if I were some different order of being."

"I understand. You know, more or less, we all get that from them."

He went on a little heartened:

"He did attract me; I think it was the elemental strength —the abundance of raw material in him. He repelled me too. People like us can't ever start at the beginning, no matter how much we want to. Too many cards already played for us! I think maybe I'm jealous of those who can."

"We've got something else," said Felicia quickly. "It must be that we've got something else."

"Well, I think even now that we did each recognize the other as a significant human being. But he was utterly uncommunicative—never said a word. I never saw him again except as I passed him in the Yard. But I didn't forget him, and Kennedy used to talk to me, more or less, about him all through the year. Then he turned up a senior in this course. That's when I really began to dislike him."

"And it wasn't just because he wouldn't work?"

"No; you were quite right, as usual. It was because he, being under me, didn't wank to work. I'm all kinds of a fool inside—conscious, sensitive ass—I never did excell in the things other boys prized. I've spent my last seven years, when most of them were having glorious and extravagant adventures—audacious and extreme delights—I've spent them with sober books and scholars in old buildings. I've been living with remote matters, old voices, other minds. When I got my degree and began to teach I felt as if I were coming into my own at last. And when he came into the

course I thought perhaps it was the remembrance of my personality, or some promise of power in me as a teacher, that had drawn him——"

"You're a brave man," said the girl suddenly. "I've tried to tell the truth myself this evening—to Mother. It isn't easy."

A wry smile lifted the corners of his mouth.

"It's only possible to speak truthfully with your equals," he said. "We might remember that, ourselves, to-night. Well, he has just sat through the course, moody, indifferent, utterly weary of me and it alike. I read his blue book to-day and it simply doesn't try; you'd call it insolently incorrect. It made me realize that he's the chief factor in that feeling of disappointment that's been coming over me this fall. You know how a cloud'll drift silently over the landscape, washing out the color, dimming everything? I feel as if my life were like that to-night."

"You're unfair, Percy. You don't get your own real attitude toward him. It's not a personal disappointment you're realizing—it's a disenchantment with what you're doing. I know it," she added "because I have it too—a sort of disillusionment with the whole scheme of things. Now you've got where you wanted to, it doesn't seem worth while; isn't that it? The joy has gone out of it."

"I dare say. It meant a lot to me to get my degree. For two years I just toiled for that doctor's examination. I didn't mean to have merely the indispensable minimum of stuff; I wanted a background to set it against. When you answer the sort of questions those old men fire at you, what you suggest by the way you do it of the more you might say, but don't, means a lot. I worked, I lived, I even exercised for it. Nothing would have ever got me into a gymnasium but the hope of a Ph.D.! When the day came and I went into that examination room I thought I was going to funk it; I couldn't see clearly; it wasn't my voice but another's I didn't know that answered for me. But then something seemed to click back into place, and I loved it! I

remember smiling a little to myself when they began to fling the questions, and saying, 'Is this all it's going to be! I know I can do this!' I'll never forget when it was over. It was a warm afternoon and when I was walking away, feeling as though I were bathed in a sort of golden light, old Professor Higginson came running after me to call me back for their congratulations. I felt as though I'd come into my majority at last!"

"Just the way I felt when I came 'out'!" she laughed with faint derision. "And now I know it wasn't worth any such feeling. How it irritates me every time I think of it!"

"I dare say that's something like it. To-day, I stood on the steps of Mathews, looking down the Yard and it seemed, seemed as if the twilight were closing in on me. There's something terrible about the exacting pride and power of an ancient institution like Harvard. It feeds on the freshness of your mind; it turns to leanness the slenderness of your body. Undergraduates don't get it; they're still on the outside. But if you take the place seriously, reject the obvious values which engross the crowd and set out to find the truth of things—then you get your reward—oh, yes! but you pay, you pay high for it. I hadn't realized that after the University accepts you, you aren't your own any longer, you're hers. I don't know that I'm ready for it yet!" he cried. "I don't know that I'm ready for it!"

"You've got to be a *whole* man for that, haven't you?"

He struck his fist sharply on the chair arm.

"It's cruel of you to say that to me! I won't accept it!"

"It's only what I've learned for myself. Mother brought me up to think it was enough to be a Morland. Began by naming me for my great aunt, so that I sound like the 'heroine' of an Anne Radcliffe novel! But it isn't enough. Not if you want to be a whole woman! And unless you are that you can't stand it! And it's not enough to be a teacher. That's where you were wrong about Monty. If that's all, you can't stand it, either!"

"May be? I'm not sure about Monty. Well, I went over

to the Library just before dinner, and, I suppose it was my mood, but old Gore Hall looked positively grotesque. In our section of the stacks I found a pair of rubbers, belonging to one of the cataloguers, neatly packed away behind my first edition of Voltaire! I could hear two of the old Janes gossiping somewhere! The whole place smelled of old clothes and cold lunches!"

"It *is* an absurd building!"

"Well, it made me see Cambridge all over again as if for the first time. This wasn't any longer the 'University Library.' It was a pale and ghastly wilderness of books, all so neatly and mechanically packed away on their little iron shelves, half of them dusty, obsolete, no use. And over across the river was Soldiers Field, and the wind, and the setting sun, and running and shouting and laughter and lusty youngsters striding about with the look of kings. And in between me and the Field was the Square, and the shops, and cars full of people—the turbid stream of the world that sweeps along the gray throng of dull folk occupied with the common, obvious joys, the simple hearty things of everyday life. And I! I had chosen these dim, cold stacks with the dirty-white iron shelves, and the musty, multitudinous books. It made me shiver: I didn't know but that I had let the real prize slip through my fingers!"

"I used to think that was true of you, Percy. But now, I guess it's not. You are a real man; that's why you feel it. So," she added softly, "you do belong to the company of Harvard scholars!"

"Thank you," he said bitterly. "I worked years to earn the right to have great and wise men say that to me. And now I find it means most when I hear it from the lips of a woman! What a world! And what fools we are who live in it!"

"Percy, isn't one way to keep Gore Hall in touch with Soldiers Field and Harvard Square what I've been asking you to do for Dick Blaisdell, to-night?"

"I hardly think that's why you've been doing it!"

"Is it so impossible that it might be part of the reason?"

"Well, if it was," he said with faint satire, "I don't think you knew it, at the time! And, considering the way we've been talking together, the last five minutes, don't you think the least you can do now is to tell me just what it is you do mean?"

"But I haven't the least objection to telling you. Except when you demand it, as though you had some right to it. Really you and Mother, between you, do manage to make a great deal out of a little! Of course I haven't just been teasing and bantering to-night about Mr. Blaisdell for nothing. I am awfully interested in him——" She looked up.

"Anyone could understand that," he said evenly. "We both agree that he's an unusual chap." But he was finding it hard to keep a grip on himself.

"I want to do something for him. Stand by him. I feel, oh, I feel as if he were a child to be cherished! I think he's meant to be something big and—and I want to aid him to it. That's why I'm asking if you can't use even those contacts with him, in that French course, to help him get hold again?"

His mind was working busily. Here was a romantic girl, playing *dea ex machina* to a boy? Was that all? Well, whether it was, or not, would depend somewhat on him. The one thing he saw she would not let him do was to decline that request, refuse to meet its challenge. Nor did he fear over much the possible rivalry. He knew something of Blaisdell's steady declension during the past year. He knew, too, his own determination to win her; surely, by birth and character and achievement he had the advantage. He placed no great value on imaginative, intuitive powers and insights. Courage, will, resource; these would win the day unless he muddled it now by some jealous stubbornness. Reflection showed that generosity, on his part, would best meet her present mood.

"All right," he said. "I'm on! I'll do what I can for him. Really," he laughed ruefully, "I haven't much idea

how to go about it. But if you'll help me, I'll try. We must do it together or I'm sure to fail with it!"

The kitten purred, in lazy contentment, in its basket. Bright, little flames leaped and fell and murmured in the grate. The vivid face above the mantel, caught behind the meshes of a veil, looked down. Suddenly he took a step forward and came and stood over her. She felt breathless, a little put to it.

"I musn't keep you any longer. I know it's a very uncertain three-quarters of an hour from here to the Square. I'm glad you came."

But his eyes were fixed on her's; she trembled a little.

"You and I," he said, "have been on the level, these last few minutes, to-night. You don't know what it means to me, nor what it's cost me either, perhaps. I've got to say one more thing before I go. I could do anything you wanted of me if you'd let me do it for you. Would you mind very much if I said that I would do what I could for Richard Blaisdell, for that reason?"

She had drawn away from him toward the center table and was leaning on it. Finally she looked up at him, half angrily, half piteously.

"You oughtn't to ask that kind of a question. And, really, I—I don't know, anyway!"

IV

THE maid had long since disappeared, so Felicia rather absently locked the door, put out the lights, and went slowly up the darkened staircase. There was a faint glow above, sifting out upon the landing from her room.

It was a low-ceiled chamber, cool, and still, and dim. An old paper, white, with a diapered pattern in gilt—the sort one sometimes sees on great bandboxes in ancient attics and which suggests grave and slender women in crinolines, lace collars, and cameo brooches—covered the walls. Faint odors of garden herbs came from the turned-down sheet and white hangings of the narrow bed; the uncertain light caught and gleamed upon the round brasses of an antique dressing-table and the tarnished gilt of the mirror above.

The girl crossed over to the dressing-case and lighted the tall candles on either side of it. There was a warm, woolly rug on the floor before it, on which had once been worked, in colored worsteds, the quaint effigy of a cat, and, on the rug, stood an old, painted chair. She half mechanically changed into her loose gown and slippers and sat down before the mirror to perform the evening's final, mystic rite, the brushing and braiding of her soft and waving hair. Yet clearly her mind was not on the wonted task; for moments at a time the rhythmic movements ceased and she sat gazing through the polished surface of the glass into the wide dominions of the spirit.

"Men are so queer," she thought vaguely, "it's incredible that they don't realize how transparent they are. And how dreadful when their mothers let them grow up without a sense of humor? A solemn man is such a funny object. . . . "

Slowly and absently she drew the comb through the loosened, rippling waves of hair.

"I wonder why he came over to-night . . . months since I've seen him. . . . I didn't know men confessed that way. . . . You don't like it . . . but there's a thrill in it. They actually let you see what's inside . . . not so easy to do at the end as when you're beginning. . . . There's a difference between confessions and confidences . . . you wouldn't get Percy Barrett doing that sort of thing . . . what pride that man has . . . no self-pity there. . . .

"They must like you if they do it . . . he couldn't help himself after he got started. . . . I do wonder just why he really did it. . . . Of course, he's ever so much younger than Percy anyway. . . . And Percy must have been born self-conscious in his cradle. . . . I'd like to know exactly what that boy's been doing. . . . They're so different from women . . . go through so many things we don't have to . . . they don't really worry much about it, go over and over things in their minds as we do . . . just forge ahead and forget it. . . . How they do love to 'start something'! . . .

"Pain is harder . . . oh, much harder for men when they do have it . . . they aren't used to it. . . . Some of them feel things more than others. . . . I wonder if Percy does . . . that boy knows what he's getting and it cuts deeper. . . . My, he *was* bitter to-night. . . . He can say things! Of course, Percy's one of us, he understands . . . it does tell; he'd naturally perceive what, if a man doesn't understand, you simply can't explain. . . . It would mean a lot if . . . for whoever had to live with him. . . .

"It was too funny to see them together. . . . Dick is so masterful, and so silly. . . . and moody! He's two or three people all at once. . . . He'd take a deal of looking after . . . fascinating boy. . . . And wasn't P. B. self-sufficient! It didn't last long, though! Of course, a roommate could be a perfectly terrible irritation if he put

his mind on it; they're nothing but babes when they start out over there anyway . . . none of them sees what's under his very nose. . . . He certainly does need some one to take care of him. . . ."

So, the clear eyes dimmed, Felicia sat before the mirror and the flickering candles, in the soft and mellow light of her still, hushed room, amid the silence of the old and sleeping house, dreaming—dreaming, as the comb slipped through the shining strands. Dreaming on the edge of a wide, wide land, never quite entering the enchanted country, not perhaps quite knowing that it lay just before her, but letting the mind, unleashed and free, wander at will among the imaginings and pictures, the songs and visions, of the borderland. It was nicer to sit looking over than to enter.

Suddenly she flushed pink, and moved impatiently in her chair. How idiotic to be mooning along this way, candles nearly burned out, her hair half done, thinking of nothing at all; just idling and musing about she knew not what! How foolish, but how fascinating, too. Those two absurd men-children, so ridiculously unlike—the way men looked at you so unconsciously—cool yet possessive eyes like Percy's, bold yet supplicating eyes like Dick's—she wondered when she'd see him again. Of course, there was no chance of his being at Lucy Hunnewell's dance on Friday night; he was certain not to be on her list—he'd be heavy as a dancer but rather stunning in evening clothes.

She got up from before the mirror and turned up the gas in the iron bracket projecting from the wall. She crossed over to a table before the window, on which stood an open, rosewood writing-box, velvet lined. There she stood for a moment, pen in hand, considering. Finally, she wrote:

"Dear Francis: Do you know one of this year's freshmen, who is Archie Moffatt's cousin? I'm not sure of his name, but I believe he is rooming with Richard Blaisdell. Do look him up and tell me what he's like. Yours,

"Felicia."

* * * * * * *

Meanwhile, two hours and more before, Dick, hardly knowing where he was and treading air, had left the Morland homestead. He passed round the old pine in the sweep, closed the little iron gate behind him, and was on the highway. With all this inner tumult physical motion was imperative; he would not ride, but walk to the transfer station. He swung down the street at a rapid pace, in a swelling mood of psuedo-moral exaltation. All the recent low and sensual life, the previous dull inertia and cowardly despair seemed passed and done for. It was as though he had been lifted up to view its sordidness, so distant now as to be without call or meaning, spread out beneath him, from afar. How needlessly blue he had been as he sat on the window-seat that very afternoon in the cold disorder of the Mathews' study. The dark routine of his more recent days had risen up before him then—days which had not been swift opportunities to employ, but leaden-footed hours to get rid of—days of ever more reckless, ever less enjoyable indulgences, and of ever lessening pretence of study.

And now it was all over! He had no feeling of shame or anguish about it; rather the sense that he had been more the victim than the lover of his sins, and was now escaped, filled with exultant joy at so swift release. For that release had easily come. The road had been short and smooth, not steep and long; surely, therefore, it could not have been quite so soiled and bad—that departed life, nor he so fallen as it had seemed to him on this very day's so-distant afternoon! There was nothing irretrievable—could be no irretrievable loss yet! Else how explain this quick and blessed change?

A certain high and pleasant indignation began to rise within him as he recalled his unhappiness over his habits. Such sins as these were hideous things and ruthlessly exploited those whom they attacked; he could well see that, and now he could be generous and comprehending with the sinner. He must help the rest of the crowd—show them the way! He understood now what was wrong. After all, it was so stupid not to work! He would rather do anything

else in the world than study, and all the time he was desperately unhappy because he was doing anything and everything except study! Well, he could see that plainly now. Just work and it would be all right! Ah, but he was glad and grateful to be free; he was not afraid now; in the high spirits of that hour all the tests and problems of the future seemed insignificant and light!

And yet, while his soul cried out with gladness that he had come this night, the high mood began to ebb, something a little poor and mean impinging upon its fatuous satisfaction. His mind dwelt, with a sort of complacent wonder, on Felicia, her wit and beauty, her high graciousness that evening. There was an unusual girl! He couldn't even imagine her in his New York set. None of the girls he knew there lived in that free, shining world. Yet she had admitted him for an hour! He squared his shoulders; the young male in him stepped off gravely, confidently, saw himself as he thought she had seen him, made a flattering mirror of her eyes. He remembered Percy Barrett, and a little thread of gratified conceit vibrated at the thought. His spirit chuckled.

Then the area of that exultant introspection again enlarged. How easily this had put the thought or the desire for drinking out of his head! He had got back to the old life, the old ways; everything would be all right now. Really, he needn't have been so frightened. Yet, while his mind thus pleasantly returned upon itself, its reiterations rang less serenely in his ears. He began to be sorry the evening was over. Now he had to think of what came next. He wished to God he had done some studying this year!

For what came next was nothing new or stimulating, but rather vigil and discipline and catching up back work, and the slow girding of the will. Some inner protest or querulous impatience broke the evenness of his walk at that reflection. His hand closed nervously. Yes, and then, too, he had 'fessed up.' There was a little stir of shame and restlessness, a half furtive anxiety at that thought. It was as though

he had crossed his Rubicon thereby, cut off his own retreat; he had to make good now; there was no evading the strife; no longer could he stave it off!

He walked doggedly again at that. How he hated to feel that the evening was finished! He couldn't bear to have pleasant experiences concluded. And how much more he hated the actual making of a decision! Who could expect him to begin, right off, this tackling of realities? Any time except just now! If he could only delay it, if merely for an hour or for a night; then, it would all come right again. He could do anything—to-morrow! Surely it was early still, and anyway it was perfectly understood that he had never meant to begin work that same evening.

Of course not, after such an experience as this! He was too nervous anyhow, he couldn't pull himself together enough to work at once. Besides, if Phil had not gone to the freshman dinner he would be there. It drove him crazy to think of trying to sit down and be quiet and plug at that desk opposite him. And it would be just like him to have stayed at home! As for himself, he could work easily enough to-morrow.

But he wasn't ready for sleep yet, had never felt less like it. What could he do to-night? Of course, he was through with drink, that went without saying; he'd cut it out; that was enough; he was never going to touch it again. But even at this hour there must be something attractive and quite innocent to which to turn. . . .

And then down the worn channels of the brain, too deeply plowed, the old desires began to run. Half unconsciously his mind wandered off to the cafés, the supper rooms of Boston. The plays would soon be out; he could see the gay throngs pouring from the glass-hooded lobbies, some to be engulfed by the grim mausoleums which served as entrances to the subway, some to go farther to less reputable, more extreme, delights. All up and down Washington and Tremont Streets would be the crowd; laughter, and lights, and motion, and excitement,—and the crowd! How intolerably

dull and dark Cambridge and the Square seemed in comparison!

Not that he had the least idea of going into town—at that thought shame and a sort of self horror pierced him like a dart. Of course he hadn't; he knew that perfectly well; he was going at once to his own room. He was irritated with himself, filled with a petty anger, that he should even have thought that he could do it! But he was impatient, moody, restless; the glow of the evening had faded, its spell departed. Why did nothing, no sensation, no resolve, last long with him nowadays? If only he could keep on feeling as he had there, by the fire, in her presence!

He had to wait at the transfer station for his tram which only ran once every fifteen minutes. So many cars not his came in—Charlestown and Bunker Hill, North Station and Shawnut Avenue, Washington Street—cars all running directly into town. He kept reading their names and seeing, in his mind's eye, the localities through which they passed. For Heaven's sake, why were there not more Cambridge trolleys! Then one came swinging into the loop, and along side of it, on the parallel track, a South Station and Rowes Wharf car which ran right by the Touraine and Hayward's. He started for the Cambridge car but it seemed as if another will, not his own, were moving his feet; some entrenched inward desire, some inescapable outward pull directing them; he found himself with one foot on the step of the Boston trolley. He jerked angrily away and climbed onto the Cambridge tram and went heavily down the aisle to the seat beside the closed motorman's platform. There he sat down, well into the corner, braced, so to speak, against the car's back and side. Was it never going to start? It got under way at last and with every added block the miserable inner restlessness increased.

He must stop it and get out! He didn't want to go to Cambridge! He was wasting time; every moment was taking him the wrong way; the evening was half gone already! He remained huddled in the corner, positive opposition to

those enticing pictures of his mind, to the creeping, mounting, inner craving, no longer possible; but passively, doggedly he could endure it. He had never dreamed that the old life had so possessed him; it indurated every nerve and fiber, every memory and association, of his being!

When the car finally went over Harvard Bridge there was a temporary relaxation; he drew a long breath and rested a moment. But as they went pounding along through the dark and barren flats the torment and the restlessness began again. He was in Cambridge now and the truculent, defensive mood swept back—Cambridge, which had so ignored and rejected him! He could have stood it, if it had not been deserved! Just ahead of him, in the darkness, was the Yard, the vast huddle of buildings, the University; already its immense and silent strength reached out and touched him; it laid cold fingers on his spirit. He knew that the University was just, but he would not confess it, and so he could not bear it. His spirit whimpered for indulgence, the false mercy that is without justice; he shrank from that proud and ancient place whose "*veritas*" made it terrible in his eyes. He dreaded getting to the Square; he wished the car might go on indefinitely; getting out meant renewed decision. His mind twisted and turned upon itself to evade that further call upon the will. How fast they were running up the avenue; already they had passed City Hall. . . . Now they were there, there!

He got up and left the trolley and walked quickly over to the Yard, entering between Dane and Grays. The quadrangle was dim and deserted, quiet as the grave. Oh, the remoteness, the infinite remoteness to him of those occasional lighted windows; he was outside, outside it all! These rooms were inaccessible to him!

He pushed by the swinging doors into the North Entry of Mathews. One sickly gas jet burned by the notice-board, casting blurred shadows on the pale blue walls, stained and seamed and defaced by the passage of many generations. There was the distant sound of a piano, the familiar, dis-

tasteful smell of the overscrubbed, splintered, wooden floor. He looked at the ugly, creaky stairs, thought of his probable roommate above. The quiet, the deadness, the cheerlessness of it were appalling. Miserable, divided, while he started for the stairs he saw the lighted café, heard the gay chatter of the easy companionship given to whoever asked, without questions or condition.

Suddenly, with a little groan like one in anguish, he turned and ran from the building, bursting through the door and out into the Square. The evening was well advanced and the tracks empty, for the moment, of inbound cars, but over by Amee's was a waiting cab. He ran across, gave a brief direction to the cabby, added, "Hurry, I want to get there quick!" and entered the vehicle. Here he threw himself back into the corner of the seat, his heart pounding, every nerve quivering, his head bent down between his hands, a lighted darkness glowing now behind the veiling of those sombre eyes.

V

A SQUARE study, crowded with miscellaneous objects, and cold, though there was a feeble fire burning in the grate. Banners, posters and various photographs, which appeared to be more the record of clothes than of personalities, covered the walls. At one side, on a writing table, a dusty jumble of notebooks, library texts, caps and mufflers, the days' *Crimson* lying on top. An air of stale untidiness pervaded the entire apartment with the exception of a desk, which, by way of contrast, was quite the most striking object in the room. It was a new, table-top affair, its furnishings neatly arrayed on either side, a framed photograph of an elderly woman placed in the precise middle of the back. There was a clear space on the wall above it, an area immune from poster or banner. In the center of it hung a Maxfield Parrish print, Sinbad the Sailor crouched on the prow of his brown barque, tawny sails bellying out above him, behind him the ultra-marine vastness of the sky.

Before the desk a boy was sitting. Spread open on its gleaming surface lay the Sixth Book of the Iliad; and, on a fair, blank sheet beside him, in clear and careful penmanship, he was making a translation. A little piece of waste paper was by him and on it he would try the various equivalents for the classic words, considering, inventing, rejecting, with unconscious enjoyment, and then transferring his chosen phrases to the larger sheet in letters like copper-plate. He was a slight, delicate-looking lad, leaning forward a little in his desk-chair, his coat carefully buttoned, his high collar a gleam of spotlessness. Above the clean-cut, compressed lips his eyes, dark, clear, intolerant, were absorbed in the poet before him. He was far away from Cambridge or the

University by the Charles, deep within the stiff, pale world of nouns and gerunds, adjectives and verbs. For this blind Homer sang and Hector and Andromache made their last farewell upon the topless towers of Ilium!

Across the room, half watching him, was Dick. You might have looked twice before you were sure that he was the same boy who had sat by Felicia's fire the night before. He had slept late that morning, cut all but one of his courses, was in an ugly mood with himself and everybody else. He was hardly a pleasant figure to contemplate, as, clad in bath-robe and slippers, minus collar or tie, he lounged in the morris-chair before the grate, blowing out the slowly curling smoke of his cigarette with petulant puffs.

His eyes traveled about the study, first to the windows, then gloomily over the pictures, then returned to the boy, his crossed leg swinging backward and forward from the knee. The room was quiet; the boy worked steadily on; so far as he was concerned no one else was there. Suddenly Dick hitched his chair around from the fire.

"Well, what about your Freshman dinner?"

There was a surly note in the voice, something provocative, lying in wait to fight. Phil looked up from the book, his face falling and settling a little at the sudden thrust of the question.

"It was at the American House, I believe. I didn't go to it—Monty was there." His voice was high and vibrant, an unconscious intensity behind it.

"Didn't go! Why not? You won't have a ghost of a show unless you get about more with your crowd."

"I didn't go because I didn't want to. I haven't any interest in this 'now-let's-all-get-together, fellows,' by order. There's nothing in it!"

"You're damn-foolish. You don't run with the right bunch, anyway."

No answer. Dick lit a fresh cigarette, inhaled a couple of breaths, threw it nervously into the fire, and, in a moment, had lighted and was puffing at another. There was no other

sound; the dormitory was subdued to its after-dinner solitude; occasionally the boy's pen scratched faintly over the paper; the leg swung backward and forward from the knee.

"In heaven's name, why don't you speak up or do something! This isn't a tomb or an ice-house!"

Again the lad's face changed; it stiffened, something of hardness and rebellion, something, too, of helplessness came into it. He spoke with a certain cold exasperation.

"You know perfectly well I've got to get this lesson."

Dick lifted himself on his elbow to look over the edge of his chair.

"What is it? Writing your daily theme? Doing what old Hill used to talk about, I suppose—'dissecting your soul with Meredithian aphorisms'!"

The boy flushed hotly; he closed the book.

"Is that what you used to do as a Freshman?"

"Not by a damn-sight!"

"So I've heard. Well, I don't do it, either!"

"You spend time enough at that desk. A fellow has a right to expect something from his roommate——"

"Civility?"

"Don't get fresh! Something besides everlasting grinding—— It makes me tired! A man doesn't dare open his mouth here! This isn't a deaf and dumb asylum!"

Phil's eyes appeared to be gravely regarding the yellow stains ingrained on Dick's fingers. There was intensity enough in his attitude now, a pale resentment at that hectoring voice.

"Well; what do you want to do? Do you want to work on the French?"

"Oh, chuck the French! Barrett's all kinds of an ass; I've no use for him!"

The boy turned more toward him and began to speak quite slowly:

"He asked after you this morning."

"Asked after me! In class? What for?"

"After class. He happened to come out when I did and

walked across to Boylston with me. He asked me where you were."

"What did you tell him?"

"What do you think I was likely to tell him? I said you'd —you'd been out late and were sleeping over. Monty Ward came up just then"—there was a subtle change, something cruelly significant coloring his inflection as he pronounced the boy's name—"so I left him. Then, Monty asked after you, too."

"In the name of heaven, why can't your freshman pals and faculty friends leave me alone? What did Ward want?"

"He didn't want anything. He wasn't seeking, he was imparting information."

Dick turned to look at him. At once, by some slight gesture or new expression, the boy seemed to withdraw fastidiously, to place himself further away from the big figure.

"What d'you mean by that?" said Dick slowly. "What information did he impart?"

Phil's clear, dark eyes looked out unwaveringly, mercilessly at him.

"The freshmen were all in town, too, last night, you know. And most of them came home late—too."

"Well, what are you driving at?"

"You really want to know? I'd just as soon tell you. He called out, 'Say, you've got a peach of a roommate! I saw him well soused, at one o'clock this morning, trying to sing a duet with one of the fair ones at Marliave's. He certainly was a scream!' "

Dick got up out of his chair.

"Barrett heard him say that?"

"He isn't deaf, is he? He was right in front of us. He isn't dumb, either!"

"He heard that!" breathed Dick. "Hell!"

There was an involuntary shiver of distaste from the lad's shoulders.

"If you don't want to talk any more I'll be going on with

my Greek." He turned back to his big, shining desk. Again the other might have been dismissed from the room.

But Dick was gazing like one dazed into the fire, his cigarette smoldering unheeded between his fingers. As it burned down, and the red ash bit the skin, he threw it violently onto the coals.

"Damn it all!" he cried suddenly. "I'm sick of it! Damn the whole blooming place!"

He pushed aside his chair and, going into his room, got into collar and tie and hunched on his overcoat. He had a half-vision, as he crossed the study, of Phil, pale, quiet, seemingly absorbed in his Greek, still filled with a cold resentment. It made him bang the door behind him with an extra viciousness before he plowed down the dormitory stairs. He turned up his collar and pulled his cap over his eyes as he slouched through the Square. He felt tough and he wanted to look tough and to flaunt it in the faces of any of the faculty or the boys who might pass by. He'd go in town—yes, by gad, he would! Make a real night of it this time! Let 'em see how much he cared for their sham respectability, their plaster sainthood! But he couldn't stick it; something sickened within him at the thought of it; there was no use in going into town.

He turned into Leavitt's. Lounging along the wall was Bob Merrill, a homely youth with wide, humorous mouth, stubby fingers that reminded one of a machinist's shop, a general air of amusing, inert flabbiness; and Basil Stokes, fair, pale, of attenuated figure and mild, evasive eyes. But the man he was looking for sat between them, one Atwood. He was a ferret-eyed, lean-faced youth, with a swarthy complexion, and sinewy, lithe hands that seemed perpetually on the point of laying hold on something. He sat, idly jabbing his penknife into the arm of the chair, a boy no older than Dick, but a different sort of being, a kind of ageless sophistication in his eyes. Sardonic energy seemed to radiate from his figure. He was chaffing with Merrill, something mocking lying back of his quick glances whenever he looked to-

ward him. Basil was pulling moodily at an old briar, lulled by the smooth roll and sharp click of the billiard balls, gazing abstractedly at the shirt-sleeved figures as they passed round the tables. He took his pipe from his mouth, rubbing the bowl softly along his cheek, as Blaisdell pushed through the doors.

"Why, here's Dicky! Want a game?"

"Hello, you fellows! Sure! The sky's the limit. Ready for anything!"

Atwood's mocking eyes surveyed him. Waving a lean hand he began speaking in a deliberate, biting accent.

"So we cut our French today. Be careful, Dicky, you might hurt his feelings!"

"Isn't our Percy one nice, flossy lad?" drawled Merrill. "He understands the Romance Languages, and he never swore nor used naughty words, nor pushed anyone's face in, in all his life!"

"He gives me the sleeping sickness," murmured Stokes. "Why in thunder did we ever take his course? He's as stuck on himself as a fat prima-donna!"

"Forget him!" said Dick savagely. "The gang's here. What's doing?"

"Quite right. No need to bawl him out," went on Atwood. "He's indecently proper and damnably well-behaved, already. Talked about the Comedié Francaise to-day, Dicky. Oh, tut-tut, how can you fellows waste so much time on those cheap shows! Made me feel like thirty cents! I'm going to reform and be refined!"

"Choke it off, will you, fellows?" said Dick sullenly. "The gang's here; what do we care? Who's for a rubber? The fellow who loses can pay for the table."

Basil gathered himself together. "I'm on," he said briefly. They seized a table just vacated and began to play. Blaisdell's first shots were erratic.

"Off your feed, Dicky? Don't punch the ball so! Keep cool!"

"Go to hell!" said Dick. "I know how to play this game!"

He won the second, but lost the rubber, and paid up quivering with anger. Couldn't he even play pool any more?

"This pipe's out," said Basil, "got any Fatimas?" Then, as he was lighting up, "Have another go at it?"

"No, I'm sick of it!"

Atwood slid smoothly off the cushions.

"Come up to the room," he said, softly, "We'll have a quiet game. The chaps who lose can pay for the seats tomorrow night at the Tremont. Anna's in town. Refreshments furnished."

"That's the talk," cried Dick.

They passed through the Square, into the Yard, and up to a second story room of Hollis, a spacious, low-ceiled chamber. There was a brass plate on the door with the names of graduates of distinction who had occupied the room in the centuries preceding.

"Behold our elders and betters!" murmured Atwood as they passed by it. He got out a bottle and glasses from the chimney cupboard, his quizzical eye on Dick's. "Hair of the dog that bit you?"

"Call it a drink and be done with it!" said Dick truculently. His hand trembled as he took and swallowed it. Atwood continued to regard him with a bright and sardonic look.

"Hard bitten, Dicky?"

"Quit your fooling, fellows," said Basil. "If we can't get up some excitement soon I'm going to hit the hay. Get out the cards! Lord, what a bore life is, anyhow! What's it going to be, pitch or poker?"

They settled down to their game. The smoke hung in bluish haze beneath the low ceiling; Dick dealt expertly. It was pleasant to hear the sifting sound of the shuffled cards, the soft slap of jacks and aces on the table. He was playing with Atwood and they were winning. He had another drink. Life was easier and pleasanter, the room was comfortable, he felt expansive.

"Say, you fellows, I made an absolute and utter ass of myself last night. Blue as the devil over it! Went to call on a mighty nice, an almighty nice girl. Then, like a damn fool, went in town afterward and got lit up—hit things up generally!"

"So that's what it is?" said Atwood, "Don't let that put you on the blink!"

Merrill's humorous mouth looked wider, looser. "Not getting soft, Dicky? Signed up yet for the purity squad!"

"Do I look it? Still, you know, that's not just a nice thing to do! And, damn it! Barrett knows of it! Heard Monty Ward telling Phil!"

"So that's what's got your goat, Dicky," said Atwood, "Why worry? What can he do? Absolutely nothing!" Again that biting accent. "These pure young ladies in trousers think we're worried when we walk the primrose path, or downcast if they hear of it. Much they know about it! Do we accept their little rules of conduct? Do we think their way is the way we ought to go? I should say not! Dear Percy," he mocked softly, "we prefer to be positive and dirty devils rather than timid and messy saints. You can go to thunder!"

"He'll mind his own business," said Basil languidly. "They learn what not to see!"

"But, damn it, it's not so much Barrett, it's the girl! She's —she's not like us and our crowd!" Dick looked appealingly at Atwood. "Just a wonder! The very best, I tell you!"

"Who is it?" drawled Merrill.

A sharp pang of terror pierced him.

"None of your business!" he said with sudden irritation.

Atwood's bright eyes bored into him.

"My dear boy, forget it! Women are all alike!"

Dick's fist came down on the table.

"They're not all alike, I tell you! I'll say they're not! She's different. You don't know anything about it!"

"Gad!" said Basil, "I believe Dicky's in love! Oh Lord,

what a joke! For heaven's sake, old man, look out! Safety first!"

"In love!" Dick turned on him white with fury. "Don't be an utter ass! I'm not a million miles within being in love!"

It was an awful thought; his mind absolutely refused to entertain it, much less to reason out why it was so awful to him.

"Get on with the game!" he said.

"Another drink, Dicky?"

"No; I've had enough."

Atwood smiled again.

"Hard bitten, Dicky?"

"What d'you mean?"

"You're in love, old boy, in love! Caught at last—Our Richard!"

"You lie!" said Dick, white-faced. "I'm not in love!"

"All right," said Atwood pleasantly, "You're not in love." He was still smiling. 'Let's have a new deal all round."

They finished the game, settled their stakes, then Dick got up.

"I'm through, fellows," he said, "dog tired! I'm going to turn in." There was a note half of panic, half supplicating, in his voice. And indeed a mortal weariness had overtaken him. Yet he was hungry, too, at least not precisely hungry, but there was that sinking, gnawing feeling in his stomach and an infernal fever in his heart. He went over to Rammey's, got an egg sandwich, and gulped some black coffee. It rather steadied him. Then, like one who seeks a refuge, some place to be alone in, he went back to Mathews. The study was dark and deserted. Phil was out, thank God for that! He began now to let himself think about Monty's tongue and what Barrett had overheard. He had pushed it away from him all the evening, but now it was welcome, as if something worse lay beyond and he would fend that off by dwelling on this. It was a rotten situation. To have been found sitting in that high and simple room, trusted and made welcome, to have left it with her goodwill

and invitation to return, while this other man stood by and saw, and then to have him know that he had gone straight from that atmosphere and presence to——

What piffle the fellows talked and what rotters they were! His heart quivered again at the terror that had pierced him when Basil had asked who she was. He knew how these classmates of his would speculate and gossip if they had learned her name. And then he remembered again how readily and cordially she had received him, taken him on trust. He sheered away from that. They didn't know who she was; they never should know. But Barrett knew! Well, that was all—all. He had been a cad; he would admit that, lash himself with it; say and think anything about himself on that score. But that was all there was to it!

From the litter on his desk he fished out the sporting page of last Sunday's *Times*. Harvard had won from Princeton the day before; the sheet was full of it. He might have been on the eleven himself, he had the build for it, but they never gave him a fair show. He wasn't drinking much of any in those days, but he never had even a look-in! The eleven, the clubs, perhaps even his own degree—too late! No! Yes! Too late!

Classes cut to-day; no lessons done for to-morrow. French came again in the afternoon; he didn't want to face that French class. Oh, what's the use! He wished the whole thing and he with it were in hell and done with it! He threw an empty cigarette packet into the fire and began walking up and down the room with set face and uneven stride, a muscle twitching now and then in his cheek. There seemed to be a fever racing in his brain. He was thinking, seeing the past years. His mind went out, far beyond Cambridge with its rigid and perplexing standards, its cold contempt of barbarian delights and vanities, to that distant, roaring city of New York, where at least it could move with some degree of confidence and familiarity. He was lonely and—and frightened; he wanted his home, but while his mind turned toward it there was added a new element to his misery to

realize that this very Cambridge, which had so rejected and ignored him, had yet effected some change within his spirit which made the hitherto accepted values of that home to appear no longer in a serene and all sufficient light. His memory ran backward to that day, three years ago, when he had come up, a hearty and untutored child, to the pale intricacies, the silent prejudices of this University life. He had thought to grapple, humorously, gayly, with its devitalized idealism; have a stand-up fight, hot blood and honest appetite against mannered decorum and scholastic pretence. But he had discovered that this was not the Cambridge way. It either accepted or ignored you, but it never seemed to come to grips. What a fool he had been! How hopeless now the folly!

Again, that mortal weariness assailed him. He couldn't stand it; he felt as though he wanted to break down and cry; ask for help; tell some one. No, he didn't; what was the matter with him? There was nothing much to it, nothing really serious had happened.

The room had gotten very close and hot. He went at last into his bedroom, pulling the curtain over the door, and threw up the window. He was trembling with weariness; he would go to bed. Presently he stretched out between the cool sheets, lying on his right side so as not to feel the pounding of his heart.

VI

When Dick had burst from the room Phil turned back, doggedly, to his Greek translation. His whole being seethed with the sense of unprovoked and undeserved ill treatment. He had entered college that autumn from the most staid and least informed of homes. His father was dead, and he, the youngest and only surviving child, had been brought up by his mother and grandmother. As Monty Ward irreverently put it, he had been "raised on decayed gentility, family portraits and old romances and wasn't weaned yet!"

Still, in the early days of the college year, he had liked his roommate, barring some secret reservations as to his taste in personal adornment and interior decorations. But, as the weeks went on, Dick's occasional oaths, his frank and pagan speech, had made him shiver. Here was unmoral language which always seemed to him immoral and, not infrequently, indecent. And then there was that night, a damp, chill evening before October was half out, when, for the first time, Dick had come in not himself. It was late, close onto twelve, and Monty Ward had been there—his first long and confidential visit. The two boys had sat before the just-lighted fire, lamp turned out, watching the red embers drop from the settling coals into the ash beneath. Slipped comfortably down in their chairs, with hands in pockets and legs stretched out to the ruddy glow, they were tasting to the full the new privilege of being men. Solemnly and sincerely had they talked; even the absurd Monty had been serious that evening. Each desirous of displaying himself and winning the other's esteem, they had dis-

cussed most of the insoluble problems, settling them all according to the particular tradition of their elders.

And then Phil had heard that curious fumbling at the door, those uncertain and futile attempts to fit the key into the lock. Before he could begin to suspect what might be the trouble, Dick came, or rather got, into the room. It was dark, and warm, and close; his already confused sense and dizzy head were quite done by it. He managed to walk clumsily to his chair, while the odor of his breath began to penetrate the study. There was a startled glance of incredulity and horror on Phil's part, and of extreme embarrassment, not unmixed with amusement, on Monty's, and then the latter incontinently withdrew. Whereupon Phil, white and trembling, his mouth up, had turned on Dick and said, in a choked voice:

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

And Dick, always more brutal than maudlin in his cups, had answered:

"Yes, freshman! Help me into bed!"

So the frightened and bewildered lad had assisted at that undressing, and there had been more dreadful and disgusting things to follow—no, no! never, this side of time, could he forgive or forget that horrible, degrading night!

As far as he was concerned, then, the books were closed. Dick had been tried in the balances and found wanting; the freshman hated and despised him, and to-night he felt he would have done anything to get away and be rid of him. The zest had gone from his evening's task; that bright world of the spirit, its high romance, its glorious spaces, had vanished, as though never to return. Yet the next day's assignment must be translated, of course he must "get his lesson"; he went on parsing and construing. But it was no unwelcome interruption when, with scarcely a preliminary bang, Monty himself bounded into the room, his round eyes shining with mischief and excitement.

"What, ho!" he cried, with a shrewd and hasty glance around the study. "And is the dear partner of our joys and

sorrows out? Bless his convivial heart! All is not lost, then, yet! I will remain! *Wie geht's?"*

"Rotten!" said Phil moodily. "Rotten. I can't study; you can sit down."

"Thanks for them kind words!" said Monty, piling all the cushions of the window seat into a heap, depositing his plump person upon them, and swinging his short legs violently to and fro. "Say, d'you never leave this calm and chaste retreat, this abode of sobriety, learning and connubial peace, except to put the feed-bag on or attend classes? Why don't you 'come out' for something, or 'do' something? You're a member of the Freshman, *the* Freshman class, that glittering galaxy of wit, learning, refinement, piety, dope, drivel and delicious drool! Why don't you identify your person with its splendors? Gee, Phil, I haven't seen you out to freshman practice, even, once!"

"I don't care anything about it. So far as I can see there's nothing in it."

"Ye gods, will you listen to that! You've got to care; you must care! That's this cursed individualism that's just queering us. We young fellows, if we all get together, can stamp it out. You can't just sit here by your lonesome and work. À bas the books!" he cried, jumping down from his seat and striking a frenzied attitude. "Come out and do something for the class, help get up some college spirit!"

"What can I do? I don't like it. What I came up for was to know and understand and—find 'the light that never was on sea or land,'" he quoted gloomily.

"I should think you'd blush to say so! If you don't look out you'll let your studies interfere with your education! I know what you can do! Come out with me to-morrow and try for the *Lampoon*. They've dropped me over at the *Crimson* office so I've plenty of time. Let's go in for it together! I'll bet we can make it! Lord, all life's a joke, anyway; it's just one grand, sweet song! Four years here, plus four more long vacations—Prince; this is too much! I shall fade away! Come, the *Lampoon* office! En avant!"

Phil gazed at him fascinated, much as a child might watch a rarée show. He laughed shortly.

"I never make a joke in my life and I can't draw a line. It would be absurd!"

"Then thou art the man!" cried Monty, clambering back onto his cushions, swinging his legs faster and faster. "For Lampy's always absurd—tragically absurd! Nobody," he continued solemnly, addressing the ceiling, "is so funny in this strange, sad world as the man who never made a joke. He doesn't need to make them; he just is one all the time. Why, with us on the staff, the *Lampoon* is made! Come, oh, come!"

"Oh, choke it off! I tell you I never felt less like joking in my life. Anyway, I haven't the time."

"Time, quotha, time! Say, what d'you do with it? Why, what else is there here? Gee, when I look back upon the parlous days of my young bondage at *St. Andrew's* I fain would weep! But no more silly little recitations; no more dear, inquiring, nosey masters; no more stanied-glass windows for little Willie! Lectures, and dinky notebooks, and a cut now and then, and eat what you please, and go where you please, and get up when you please! Oh, glory! Isn't college one cinch, one gorgeous, gigantic jag of glittering joy! What more could mortal man desire! No time, quotha, no time! Well, what in the name of your advisor d'you do with it? I was out five nights last week. Phil," he cried tremulously, turning a piteous countenance upon his classmate, "dost see my hectic flush and pallid brow?"

"Idiot! You wait—wait until the Mid-Years come on. Besides, you haven't a Greek course!"

"Nay, nay, Pauline! That's where yours truly's onto the game. I just sort of stumbled like into Meterology I. Say, that's a peach of a course! As for the Mid-Years, Lord! there's months before they darken the horizon of our happy, care-free, boyish days, and then there's the 'Widow' and the seminars! Why, oh, why," he babbled, "will you take learning in diffused doses! Mine for the tabloid form!

Concentration!" he exploded fiercely, fixing his round eyes on Phil's hypnotized countenance. "Concentration! That's my motto! Take it, just once, like castor oil, in one demn'd horrid dose!"

"I guess that's the way you feel about Historv I, isn't it?" said Phil dryly. "I noticed you weren't there on Monday or Wednesday."

"But I forget!" cried Monty, hopping nimbly down and making Phil a sweeping bow. "I am an ambassador this night. I bring smooth sentences, soft sentiments from sapient Seniors, even a merry message from Francis Morland, 2nd, the great, the only Morland! Knowest thou the man?"

Little spots of color came into Phil's thin cheeks. "The editor of the 'Monthly'! No, I don't know him; I wish I did! He's tremendously popular——" Suddenly he stopped and his voice and look fell. "No, I don't, either! I don't want to know him; he's a friend of Dick's."

"Of the Bardolphian Blaisdell? Go chase your sainted grandsire, I don't believe it! Did you ever see him?"

"Of course I've seen him in the Yard."

"And you think he's friends with rikky-tikky-tavy Blaisdell! Has he been up here this year?"

"No, but I know they're friends just the same. See here!"

He picked out a book from the miscellaneous jumble on Dick's desk. It was "The Golden Treasury" and on the fly-leaf, in a rapid, graceful hand, was the following inscription:

"For Dick: and here's to his health and to many happy returns of the day!

"His very true friend,

"Francis Morland, 2nd."

"I remember he was looking at that inscription the other day when I came in. It's about the first time I ever saw him handling a book of verse. Oh, Dick knows him. Dick's fond of him, too. I know that well enough," he added irrelevantly. "No, I don't care to meet him!"

"But you don't catch on," said Monty. "He's asked me to bring you over. He stopped me on the stairs this afternoon. 'Do you know a classmate of yours, Archie Moffat's cousin?' said he. 'I have that honor!' said I. 'Bring him around to see me!' said he. 'Charmed, I'm sure, as the rabbit said to the snake!' said I. 'Drop in about ten tonight,' said he. Then he laughed that soft laugh of his."

"How does he know anything about me?" cried Phil. "I'd feel rather nervy going up there. I say, Monty, I suppose I might go. That is, if you'll go with me."

"Well, then, my Lord, the hour is struck; the banquet is prepared! Straighten out your smile, enliven that drooping countenance, and let us, oh, let us beard the lion in his den, the Morland in his Hall!"

Linking his arm in Phil's, he chasséed from the room and presently they might have been heard clattering, like two young avalanches, down the protesting stairs of Mathews. And they brought, comparatively subdued and decorous as even Monty was then, and watchful and reticent as Phil could not help being, something of their own atmosphere of exuberant vitality into Francis' subdued rooms in Claverly.

"Ah!" he said to himself, as he came forward to greet them. "The sunrise is on their faces!"

He was a maker of sentimental phrases, this slender, brilliant-looking fellow of urbane and ready manner. The likeness to Felicia in color, voice and gesture was apparent; the unlikeness, less apparent, more profound. Indeed, he was a figure to invite speculation. It would be hard to imagine a more charming, or facile, or inscrutable youth. There was something hidden, teasing, about his personality, something indefinable and provocative of questions. It looked out from the eyes with their suave friendliness, their hint of melancholy; you felt it in those slim, secretive hands whose thumbs were so often clasped within the palm. With his, as with most intricate complexes, one felt the half furtive desire to explore its several elements, perhaps because one

was not without suspicion that all of them did not invite too close a scrutiny.

Undergraduate comment, always delighting in personalities, had long been busy with him. It might be questioned if he were unaware of or altogether displeased with, the fact. What lay behind the glancing sheen of that polished and protecting surface? Was there an occasional silkiness in the voice hinting at a shrewd temper, a cynical selfishness behind? When the frank talk ran boisterously in Rabelaisian channels, why was he slightly bored? When it slid smoothly over the thin ice of more dubious conversation, was there too much, and too old, comprehension in those dark eyes? Well, one didn't know. It would have been scurrilous to affirm it; it was instinctively difficult to deny it. At all events, one must concede the ready and versatile mind, the engaging personality. He turned out graceful verse and cleverly written stories which said nothing out of the common. He played well on the piano; had his "H" in tennis. He was on the "Monthly" staff. He was a member of the Porcellian. No, without a doubt, an unusual undergraduate success was his. And yet, as Reggie Ames, with the joyous cruelty of youth, had once remarked, "Francis is terribly clever and naturally sophisticated, but he's superficial. He'd better make the most of his reputation in college; nobody will know anything in particular about him by the time he's been five years out of it."

So some dubbed him "shrewd" and some "sentimental," and some looked rather closely at him for a moment and then dubbed him nothing at all. But, by most of his classmates he was seen, not without some secret envy, as from afar, a sort of darling of the gods, predestined, by the good fortune of his inheritance, to gain the prizes and live in the sunshine of this world.

Now, however, the soft, brilliant eyes were studying Spenser. Francis could not imagine the source of Felicia's interest in the lad, but he meant to find it out. He was a youth of acute and insatiable curiosity; there was a little

jealous and domineering strain in his mind that kept it, so to speak, perpetually on guard. But quite aside from this there was satisfaction and zest in the meeting, and appraising, most of all in the fascinating and compelling, of another life. His eyes traveled from top to toe of the freshman, subtle questioning in every glance. He let the boys place themselves as they chose on the big davenport and addressed himself directly to Phil. It seemed incredible to the shy and excited lad, yet it was quite apparent that this great and famous Senior was interested in him.

"I wonder if you would be willing," he said, "to let me look over a few of your long themes in English *22* some day? Mr. Chamberlain tells me that you have turned in some really good stuff. You see, we're always on the lookout, in the Monthly office, for new material. Aren't you lucky," he added pleasantly, "to have escaped English A!"

"He certainly is!" said Monty tragically. "It makes my fresh young life miserable. I got a 'weekly' back yesterday, one of those fragile little children of my spirit, a beauteous bantling of my brain, with a great cross scrawled over it, and this underneath to encourage my sensitive nature: 'You don't really consider this worth marking, do you?'"

Francis laughed softly, sympathetically. But Phil, totally unheeding, felt himself on air. Something of his published in the "Monthly"! His hands went cold and his head went hot at the mere thought of it.

"Oh, I can't imagine," he stammered, "that anything I've done is worth being printed in the 'Monthly'! But it would mean just about everything to me if you'd be willing to look over some of my things. That is, if there's any time when you aren't too busy. Of course I should want you to criticize them for me!"

Francis smiled comprehendingly at him. As he leaned gracefully back in his chair, his dark, smiling eyes on Phil's, he appeared to have forgotten everything except the Freshman and his themes in *22*. He threw about the con-

versation a sort of mystic significance conveying the impression that, Monty's presence to the contrary, he and Phil were quite alone in the room, set apart by some bond of insight, some selected sympathy of the spirit. Phil's head was fairly swimming; he heard Francis saying:

"I'd like to; I don't promise to take any of them now, of course. First off, you might not be writing just the sort of stuff we want. But I'd like to see it and talk it over with you." He consulted an appointment calendar on his desk. "If you've nothing else on hand perhaps you'd like to bring some of it around next Monday evening?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Phil. "I've nothing to do on Monday, nothing at all."

He felt that he was experiencing the supreme moment of his life; his disgust and misery of the earlier hours of the evening were forgotten; Dick became easily endurable because quite negligible; he could ignore his roommate from now on—live his own life. Here was some one who really understood him. At last something had come to him which seemed like that "College life" which he had so long imagined. He looked shyly and acutely around the room, noting the Harvard diploma of Morland's father hanging on the chimney-piece, the ancient swords, an antique print of the burning of Harvard Hall, the many books. There was an old table over in a darkened corner of the chamber that caught his eye. He got a vague impression of slender, tapering legs, and the dim shimmer of glass, above. The room was bare, distinguished, full of careless ease. And yet——

It was a strange room to him, the feel of it, he meant; a curious fascination. It was rather intoxicating. He didn't know if he quite liked it? For some reason he was glad Monty was there. Never, until this moment, had it occurred to him what a safe and honest person Monty was—absurd, cherubic, dependable. It was much nicer to have Monty there——

"But now this stupid talking shop on my part is over," said Francis. "Let's forget it and hear about yourselves.

I'd be quite ashamed to have two first-year men up here only to push the Monthly. Do tell me what this year's freshman class is like! Only Seniors and Freshmen, you know, are of real importance in the college!"

At that word "Senior" a shadow crossed Phil's face, and something watchful showed again in his eyes.

"I think you know the senior I'm rooming with," he said suddenly. "Dick Blaisdell?"

Blaisdell! First Felicia, then Spenser, mentioned the boy. He had not even thought of him for years. Could he, by any possibility, be the source of his sister's interest in this lad?

"Blaisdell? Oh, a very little—once." He smiled slowly. "I seem to remember my going with him to see Olga Nethersole in *Camille,* early in our freshman year. We sat up afterward to some late and fascinating hour and told each other what we thought of women! The romance of 'college days,' you know"—he smiled indulgently at Phil—"'forever panting and forever young.'"

"Some actress!" broke in Monty. "Gee! When you've been brought up on Kings Chapel, Joe Jefferson and the Rollo Books, ain't it the grand and glorious feeling when you see anything, or any one, let go! Me for Olga!"

"That's not what I think of as 'romance,'" said Phil slowly. "It means soldiers and sailors and explorers."

"That's the way you start," said Francis. "Gallant action! 'To sail beyond the sunset and the baths of all the western stars until you die?' Yes; that's the way you begin. But isn't it rather out of date?"

"I don't mean school-boy stuff like Walter Scott's novels," replied Phil stiffly. "Naturally we've outgrown that. But every one looks forward. What's the use of living if you don't!"

"Do you know, I think Monty's hit the right track, though. He says he's fed up with all the old stuff. We fellows who were born around here are! But aren't you just as much out of date if you look to the future as you are

if you look to the past? The present's everything. That's all we have," his voice vibrated. "Let's make the most of it!"

"Gee, that sounds interesting to me!" said Monty.

"Of course," said Francis, "because it's natural. Why be afraid to be one's self?" He turned toward Phil. "Every day to 'suffer a sea change into something rich and strange'—Will Shakespeare understood! Don't you like that?"

An instinctive note of coldness crept into Phil's voice.

"There's not enough—enough sense or purpose to it. It makes me restless. It's attractive, but I don't think I'd really like it."

"Why think about it at all?" Francis laughed softly. "Just live! Experience is its own end. You ought to read Rousseau; I'll lend you 'The Confessions,' if you like? You know what he says: 'The man who thinks is a depraved animal.'"

"Then I guess I'll come out of college virtuous!" said Monty. "Say, that guy had a kind heart; he knew something!"

Again Phil began, slowly:

"I think I've heard of him. Isn't he the man that liked his dogs better than he did his children?"

"Really," said Francis, a little coldly, "I don't remember. But there's one thing sure. These are the golden days—only four years of them! So, while the sun is warm and high, to try all things. To throw away childish fears and other people's prejudices; to taste everything once, live to the furthest bounds of one's capacity! That's what college's for. After that, the frost and winter——"

He spoke lightly, but with a restrained intensity. The boys listened, fascinated. Phil felt the warm flame mounting in his spirit. And yet—— But Monty was ahead of him.

"What have you got to tie to?" he said. "Lord, I want to go on the rampage, all right, believe me! But, I say, there are limits. It sounds like you're going off your head!"

Francis turned away from him.

"I think Spenser understands it. After all, Goethe sums it up in *Faust*. I don't suppose you'd say he was off his head. 'Gefuhl ist alles,' he quoted; feeling is everything."

"I don't know whether I agree with Monty or not," said Phil uncertainly. "Everything, that I thought I was, does. But there's a sort of new part of me that won't! If I kept on feeling the way I do now I guess I'd soon lose regular study habits!"

"You've certainly got to read Rousseau and George Moore," laughed Francis. "'The only habit a man ought to have is the habit of not having one!' But there, we're all bored by my being so solemn; you'd think I was a disguised instructor. Let's play—only, you know, if you're going in for writing that's the way to do it; live first, try it all; and then you've got something to write about!"

The color came and went in Phil's cheeks; his eyes never left that mobile face. Everything that Francis said seemed transformed by the subtly modulated voice. He was swept far out from every childish mooring; the harbor lights, the windows of the quiet, simple homes, left far behind. Was this the way?

"Come on," said Francis. "We'll eat!" He got out ginger ale and pretzels; he made them feel like naughty, yet quite innocent little devils; he got them going. Then he listened, throwing in a sympathetic assent, or an illuminating question, here and there. But, for the most part, he was listening and observing, finding a subtle enjoyment in their talk. For they did talk! Phil, shy and reticent, was astounded at himself; liberty of speech seemed to have descended upon him. Monty gazed at him, round-eyed. "Say, boy, choke it off here and there; give another fellow a chance!"

So two hours sped away. It was midnight when, apparently in spite of their host's demur, the boys departed. "I'll see you Monday," said Francis in the doorway, as Spenser turned toward the stairs.

"Say, you're the lucky one!" Monty broke out, with frank envy, as the door closed upon them. "Why didn't old Chamberlain wish him on me? Lord, how you talked! You certainly did feed it to him"

They separated at his door, and Phil went back to Mathews alone. He trod the stars that night, obsessed with this unexpected good fortune which seemed to have dropped on him from the blue. Every fiber of his being was alive, quivering and tingling; every nerve in his high-strung nature taut. He felt that he could sit up all night; that he must express himself; that verse and stories and great luminous interpretations of life were waiting to be transferred from his ardent, glowing mind to paper.

Dick had gone clean out of his remembrance. It never occurred to him to wonder, or to care, whether he had come in or not. If he had lain asleep on the window-seat it is to be doubted if Phil would have seen him as he passed by. Like one in a dream he walked into his own room and prepared for bed. The dim portals of the future had unfolded; bright vistas, golden, roseate, stretched before him. Everything would come to him now! He had found himself at last!

Meanwhile Morland was sitting, solitary, before his fire. An almost inexplicable change came over him when he was alone, as if the light and significance had passed out of him. His persuasive, winning manner, the graceful, almost automatic, courtesies, the instant tact and ready, smiling acquiescence in his companion's speech or mood—these made him a quite dazzling figure when among his peers. His confident ways and gay and facile speech were accepted as outward signs of some rich inward grace; almost one took for granted that ability and personality were proportioned to the place and popularity of this so charming and accomplished youth. But it seemed as if the light only played upon the surface of that smooth life; reflected from without, not shining through it from within; just as the blank windows of an empty house may seem at times to contain

the very glory of the setting sun. His assets were largely physical; youth and beauty, the atmosphere of gayety and good fortune, the smiling eye, the melodious voice—these were his charm. So it was rather depressing dispassionately to behold him when the facile play of manner ceased and the light patter of his day and class were stilled. For then reality and appearance began to coincide, and the ensuing commonplaceness was thought-provoking. He became merely a handsome, well-dressed, ordinary youth.

And yet, not quite that—and here was the inexplicable, teasing thing about him. He was not altogether ordinary; could scarcely have made even his, not too significant, undergraduate success if that were true. No, something was there too positive to be entirely commonplace; something individual which aroused the interest, if not the approval of his more discerning mates. It seemed largely volitional at first; there was fixed and stubborn determination of some sort here. He was an expert in self-love, this lad; and there was hard and instinctive shrewdness, some remotely inherited strain of acquisitiveness in the way he claimed and held his place and pleasures. Pleasures? Ah, that was the word, in his case, that struck the middle C! There was a genuine subtlety in his outlook on life and in his estimates of men, born of the experience gained in that long quest of enjoyment, a goal pursued with the half-unconscious callousness of the self-indulgent boy. He was amiable when not crossed, negatively and capriciously kind when it was easier so, but a past master of every direct or indirect procedure by which he might gain his pleasurable way.

Here, then, was the arresting element which lay beneath the adroit address; here was the teasing thing his mates dubiously regarded without speech. Beneath the commonplaceness of what would otherwise have been merely a handsome, gilded youth, there ran this darker, individual strain; a real intensity, not of the mind, nor of the spirit, but of the flesh, was his. There was no deep sense of beauty here; he was not imaginative enough for that. But there was per-

ception of the advantages accruing to their owner from the historical and social associations of beautiful objects. Nor was there power for sustained thinking, the mind at once too evasive and too superficial for such exercise. But one inheritance, distilled and concentrated through many generations, he had—the jealous pride of place and its special privilege, and a developed, trained capacity for sensation.

He walked across the room toward the dim-shining glasses which Phil had noted in the obscurity.

"What stuff ginger ale is!" he said to himself. He filled a glass from one of the decanters before him, looked at it a moment, slowly, evenly drank its contents down. Then he returned to the fireside and his chair. He kept late hours, and he had decided to sit up and finish the last chapters of *Madame Bovary*. It was not his first reading of Flaubert's tale. The extreme romanticism of the story, coming full circle into its all but naked realism, fascinated him. Besides, it was difficult French, and it pleased him that he could read it so easily; perhaps, also, the nature of its carefully built-up detail seemed less bald, more alluring, in that smooth, foreign tongue.

He had no roommate, had never shared his abode with anyone. He liked to be alone. It was, perhaps, this strain of solitariness in his nature, that unyouthful capacity to do without too much society of his peers, which was another element in his power in the class. It always turned out that men came to him, not he to them. He was never a solicitor of companionship, yet when his own was sought no one could be more ready or approachable—or reserved.

Presently he closed the book and sat back staring into the fire.

"Monty Ward is a replica of his pompous old father. He bores me to tears! I wonder how many million boys like him are born per annum! But the other lad," he paused and rolled a cigarette daintily, "is quite another sort. I think I should enjoy captivating that youngster. And I could use a man like him in those 'Harvard Types' I want to write.

He did run a gamut of sensitive emotion to-night, restrained and, therefore, sharpened. Clever little devil! I haven't enjoyed anything as much for long. Yes; there's good material there. We'll cultivate that lad!"

Again he got up, crossed over to the dim corner of the room, poured something into a small glass, and then drained it off. Going over to his desk, he wrote:

"Dear Sis: In accordance with your cryptic instructions, I had your freshman up to-night—so behold the cheerful alacrity of brothers. His name is Philip Spenser, and he is incredibly young, but not a bad sort. Do enlighten me now as to your designs on the infant! You might include that information when you inform me by return mail, as I know you will, as to what you want me to do next!

"Your most humble and obedient,

"Francesco."

Then he made ready for bed. "Odd," he thought, as he lay, propped against the pillows, playing with a final cigarette, "that the chap should be rooming with Blaisdell. Whatever does she want of him!" He flicked the ash with sudden irritation onto the tray beside him. "They must be a well-assorted pair, though of course Spenser's asleep long before he comes in, and out before he gets up. Dick Blaisdell's not likely to rise with the lark!"

VII

But, as a matter of fact, it was Dick, not Phil, who was up early the next morning. His had been a restless and broken sleep; he heard in his brain all night the intermittent rumbling of the trolleys, the whine on the curve as they rounded Brooks House. But after a shave and plenty of cold water he looked better, and the mere feel of physical well-being gave him a specious sense of moral energy and mental confidence. The escapade of Tuesday night seemed, in the clear sunlight of Thursday morning, no great matter. Whatever Barrett had heard he had probably half forgotten by now. As for that other thought, his actual or desired attitude toward the girl herself, and what it signified, he thrust it stubbornly from his mind, resolved on an active, busy day devoted to recitations and study, the sort of occupations that neither outward foe nor inward mentor could take offence at.

But, as the morning wore on, the depression, pushed into the background of his mind, eluded him and escaped, spreading like a pall over his spirit. It centered about the class at three that afternoon, Barrett's recitation. He couldn't cut it again, he would have to go. He must face him, over the heads of the other boys. He must look up, knowing what would be in Barrett's mind as he returned that gaze. He wandered over to the library, took a book from the reserve shelf in his biology course, sat down in an extremely uncomfortable revolving chair at a high desk in the reading room, and started to study. But it seemed absurd to be there of a morning; unnatural, and the few other men, docilely or stupidly learning at the neighboring desks, exasperated him. To try to work was maddening; such scratching at the surface of his neglected tasks only revealed the untouched

depths beneath. His restlessness drove him back to Mathews. Its four enclosing walls seemed a refuge until he entered them, and then they seemed a prison.

Phil was moving about in his bedroom. As Dick entered he emerged into the study, a new book, with uncut leaves, in his hand. Dick walked over to him, a sort of apologetic gruffness in his voice.

"I say, kid," laying his big hand unconsciously on the lad's shoulder, "you know I——"

"Let me be, please," said Phil coolly. "I particularly dislike to have a man put his hands on me."

"Hold on! What's the matter? I only wanted to say, about last night——"

"If you don't mind I don't care to hear anything more about last night." The boy's dark eyes looked coldly at him. "It doesn't need any explanation, and I'm not interested in any more apologies. But we'll each go our own way from now on—I'd like that understood!"

"All right," said Dick sulkily. "Don't think I'll be bothering you if you feel that way! All right. You off to the library?"

"I'm going out," said Phil, closing the door behind him with meticulous precision.

"Darn little snob!" muttered Dick. "That's what you get from a roommate when you feel down and out!"

He got out the day's French lesson; he must master that, anyway, and he plugged fiercely at it. He'd know that translation backward and forward. And then, probably, not get called on! Still, he must know it. Then, after class, he'd go in town. Already he was holding his mind to its task by the anticipation of that release. Steadily depression and a sort of helpless terror were spreading over him because he turned so inevitably to that indulgence.

He slipped into class just before the gong sounded, and, in consequence, found himself on a side seat, close by the door, half-way down the room, precisely where nearly everyone could see him. He looked up stolidly just at the moment to

catch Percy's eye fixed quietly, rather speculatively, upon him. "Damn it!" he thought. The glance was mild and innocent enough, but it let loose his angry, despairing misery. As he looked at Barrett he saw him where he had faced him last, in the old parlor with the girl beside him. Her face seemed to look out at the boy from behind the instructor's desk, high and fine, unbelievably unspotted from the world. Hot waves of shame and remorse surged from his heart into his cheeks. He felt that they would rise forever, ceaselessly.

"Mr. Blaisdell."

The cynical and observant man before him at the desk, the man who knew, was calling upon him to recite. He got awkwardly to his feet.

"I didn't catch the question, sir."

A subdued titter from the class, a sudden restlessness, then expectant stillness.

"Will you read, please," said the level voice, "beginning at page seventy-two, the second paragraph. In French, first."

He began; his tongue could not twist around the unaccustomed vowel sounds, the open nasal endings.

"That will do for the French," interpolated the quiet voice. "Translate, please."

Again he started. The words moved slightly up and down before his eyes; the man was making a fool of him! No, he was making a fool of himself! No, he wasn't, it wasn't fair! He was a bigger chap than the cool, lithe figure sitting at the table. Let him meet him on a man's ground, anywhere except in this smug classroom; it didn't offer a real test nor a real relationship.

"What did you say? Translate again the last sentence."

He didn't quite know what he was saying. He couldn't remember the English words of that last sentence, although he had learned them to-day. There was more and more blurring before his eyes; he'd have to hold the book close to his face if he were to see the text.

"I can't do it," he said sullenly. "I don't remember all of it."

He sat down. Some one laughed quietly. He felt far withdrawn, dreadfully secure behind the waves of angry humiliation; his body clung to the seat. Meanwhile Barrett had closed the recitation and seemed to be trying to divert attention from the incident. He began to talk about a play of Racine's the class were to read next week, *Athalie* by name, a Biblical story; they might be interested in looking up the brief account in Second Kings, the eleventh chapter, to see what a great dramatist had done with such slight material. In his crisp, French accent he recited a quatrain:

> "Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots
> Sait aussi des mechans arreter les complots
> Soumis avec respect à son volonté sainte
> Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point
> d'autre crainte."

Pompous stuff! Dick's mind caught and translated the final line: "I fear God, dear Abner, and I have no other fear."

No other fear! It was intolerable. He got up quietly, took his books, and walked out of the room.

He went over to the Square for something to eat. He wasn't hungry, yet he felt faintish and craved food; besides, he didn't want to go to the club table at Memorial that night. Then he climbed again the creaking, winding stairs of Mathews to his room. He could no longer get away from that evening, from her face. He dimly felt he was near the breaking point. But he *wouldn't* break!

He threw a covert glance around the study as he entered, listened for any movement in the adjoining bedroom, and realized that, at last, he was alone. Crossing over to the window-seat, he sat down heavily upon it. The windows looked out, high over the noisy activity of the Square, to the low hills beyond the Charles, suffused now with the red-

dish mist of the chill sunset. But his eyes were fixed and strained, unnoticing and uncaring. He felt as though the truth, like the clicking of the lock upon a door that long had gradually been closing, had got him in its grip.

He did not greatly mind the afternoon's humiliation in the class room. After all, what did it matter? He passed lightly over the fact that Barrett must know of his dissipation on Tuesday night. That, too, was endurable. Then he began to analyze that conversation with the boys, over the card table, last evening. He had to, now. Why had he talked to Atwood about the previous night? Only because he was sore, and ashamed of himself, and wanted to get it off his chest. But that was not the only reason. What was the terror that had pierced him when the fellows had asked her name? Merely the shock of anyone's supposing that he would tell a girl's name, in that connection. But that was not all. It was the shock of being asked to tell *her* name. But it was nothing to him, nothing more than any other girl's name!

Then, his head went down between his hands. Oh, that was not true. There was no other name like it. It was the symbol of herself, of the girl who said, "I have absolute faith in you." No! he would not think along the path that led him in. But, again, he had to. For she had said it. And he had loved her for it! Oh, *no!* But, yes; that moment he had looked up at her, and seen, and loved. And, oh, fool, he had not known it, but had gone away to let go again. Oh, no! But, yes; he had looked up, and seen, and loved.

Then the dread insights that love brings began to operate. Mercilessly memory scourged him, whipped up dark and forgotten scenes, paraded them for him, with opened eyes, to view. It made him to possess the sins of his youth. He could not call the morning back; what had he to lay at this girl's feet? He had been willing to try, again, and then again, the sordid experiment for the sake of a new sensation. He saw the truth; he was unwilling now, because he was

unable, he was afraid, to love. But life had paid no heed and he was in love, in hell.

Night had fallen now. In that enfolding obscurity he saw her face, lovely, gracious, inaccessible, shining like a clear candle in the dark country of this world; saw it from afar, like one standing deep within the shadows of a waste and desert land. Calloused of will, unclean of heart and mind, he was cut off in the world that he had made for himself, looking toward her across impassable, dividing gulfs.

But he would not accept that awful helplessness. There was no justice in it. He could not help his nature. He had not asked for it nor had any hand in its making. He was the creature of his youth, his kind, his time. Was he responsible for that inheritance of imperious desires, for the environment that made possible, even easy, their satisfying? He had done what it was his nature to. Conscience, remorse? These were illusions. Yes? But one reality, the loss of self respect, the loss of his soul—that was no illusion. He could not gainsay that.

Then terror, like cold fingers, began to close about his heart. Out of the dim recesses of his mind rose another picture from the forgotten past. He was a small boy, spending the summer at his parents' birthplace, taken one Sunday into his grandfather's humble, country church and looking at the old man, his high cheek-bones, his lean, ascetic face, the piercing intensity of his sunken eyes. He was a small, awe-struck boy, listening to that quivering voice: "Without God we are without hope in this world. Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? Shall men draw water from an empty well? Without God we are without hope in this world." What did his grandfather mean? Strange and unreal old man!

He understood, now. There was no hope. For it was, indeed, his own self, true to itself, which had done these things. It was inevitable; it was the way of man. But why was man made that way? He did not know; no one knew;

it was the nature of mankind. His plight was the plight of all the rest, it was but an illustration of the whole. There was no sense, no justice in it; they were all prisoners in a great prison house; all caught together in the net, in the ageless, impersonal tragedy of mankind.

He sank into a deeper brooding, then, forgetting, in this vaster terror, his own puny, separate fate. Beneath the problem of his destiny was the destiny of all. He saw the abyss then that yawns at the base of all knowledge, all thought. No one can explain or understand; all are caught in the vast, aboriginal calamity of man. Each man, alone, with the immense burden of existence, its pain, its dreariness, its futile aspirations, its despair. His heart contracted with the terror of it; that first, clear sense of the helplessness and meaninglessness of life was more than he knew how to bear. The mainspring of his being relaxed under it; he was wild, desperate, he wanted to hide himself away from any human eye. He got up and went out blindly into the night.

When he awoke again to his surroundings he found himself on Brattle Street, old Tory Row, "the High," of Cambridge, up whose winding curves uncounted generations of youth, now sauntering arm in arm, now swiftly walking, eager and absorbed, had passed in good days and evil as the years had come and gone. He was far up the street, beyond the mellow dignity of Craigie House, beyond even the road that leads to Elmwood, withdrawn behind its lilac hedge, and opposite the stark, iron grill, behind which Mount Auburn lay in awful peace. He stood and looked through the barrier at the half-obscured, dimly gleaming headstones, the great, still solitude of graves. His hot eyes stared, in strained misery, across the calm enclosure. Here was the pitiable end to the brief and pitiful dream, the graves were little mounds of testimony to the hopelessness of human life.

Like one still fleeing from what he could not escape yet could not bear, he turned and pushed up the lane, and

entered the Park. Out of the darkness into the deepest darkness he could find to hide from that vast loneliness beyond. He made his way to the promontory, crowned with black and swaying pines. There, above the sullen waters of the lake, cold under the dark November sky, he paced back and forth, back and forth. From the inner convulsions of his spirit so many sentences, ancient phrases, which he had heard that old man, the Methodist rider, utter, rose to the surface of his consciousness. He had never known that he had heard them, he did not know what they meant now that he remembered them, but they tortured him, knocking, insistently, at the gates of his distracted will.

The wordless crys echoed ceaselessly through his being. He could not, with opened eyes, live and die alone. He could not go on hating himself, with no escape from that hated self, knowing that he was lost. He should kill himself and perish. Somewhere there must be something, someone, whom, if he would, he could make hear. It were too awful, else. His trembling will, his terrified and shrinking heart gathered themselves together in one supreme rebellion against fate; he pushed that inner cry that it might penetrate the universe, beyond all imaginable spaces, demanding succor. But there was no response. There was nothing, then, that he could do? Nothing. That was life. Nothing could save him for there was no one left to save.

It seemed as if his whole being crumbled under that realization. Yet something within him still made denial, refusing annihilation like a thing apart. Life was not utterly hopeless, it could not be; there must be a way of escape, else the entire fabric would dissolve. His grandfather had not been a lost or beaten spirit; true, he had not believed in this world, he had feared and hated it even as his own trembling spirit did to-night. But there had been no self pity nor despair in that old man. The gaunt shoulders, the rusty broadcloth coat, the clumsy boots—the rigid figure, hard on others no less than on itself—beneath that there had been some high assurance, an inward gentleness, as though

what lived within that mean and shabby form had overcome the world.

"Our Father," the old man used to pray. As he remembered that phrase inexpressible emotion shook his spirit; for the first time hot tears welled up into his eyes. But there could be no God. If there were He would be kind and just. He would save defenceless men in spite of their incredulity, their ignorance, their mistakes. "Our Father"—he saw the uplifted face, heard the accents of the old man's voice. It seemed to call to him, nerving him to dare to be willing to give up. Suddenly he could endure it no longer. Out of a broken spirit he made the awful plunge, threw himself upon the mercy of that vast and unknown void. As if it were the voice of another, sounding within him, a new cry arose, "O, God, I believe! Help my unbelief!"

Presently, the burden lifted. He sat down, like one exhausted, on one of the benches, shivering and trembling in the cold air. Little by little, as he sat thus, the dreadful tension relaxed, the agony subdued and ceased. His face, lifted up, was cleared again, relinquished to a great humility. From the secret, hidden depths of his boy's heart there rose slowly, insensibly, something that he knew was peace.

For some moments he sat there in a still marvel. He was himself again, back in the real world once more, that world which he had always felt was more than it seemed to be. He did not feel it now; he knew; his heart was filled with awe-struck joy. Then, as though he were returning from a journey into far countries, he began to remember his present situation, his love——

He saw quite clearly what he must do; at least, the first thing he must do. That he had forever debarred himself from that old home and its shining presence until such time, however distant, when his regained self-control was beyond all doubt, was clear enough. But he was no longer alone; that did not terrify him now. He was made clean, again; he had been given back the right to love! Even

though he loved in vain; it did not, at that moment, greatly seem to matter. He was a man once more, no beast; he had regained the right to love! His will was fixed that, come what may, he would die before he would lose that right again. And, as the first step in the long struggle, he knew he must go at once to Percy Barrett's rooms, record and make atonement for that night.

He shrank with inexpressible fear and pride from it, but it did not even occur to him to rebel; to have found his soul and to be able to obey it, to surrender, not his higher to his baser self, but his whole being, composed and at peace, to this serene Will which was both within, without—this, in that moment, was enough. He got up slowly from the seat, feeling desperately cold and stiff, and rather uncertainly left the Park. There was a moment of terrible revulsion—that man, his small complacencies and rigid standards, his smug rooms and cool, gray, scrutinizing eye—he could not do it! "God," he breathed, "God!" Then lifting up his face again, he went on.

It was after eleven when the knock sounded on Percy's door. As he laid aside the green shade from his forehead, he wondered who could be coming at that time of night. Perhaps a boy to expostulate over his grades in the late test—yet hardly at that hour. His eyes smarted—he hoped it was no one who wanted to smoke! His face was noncommital, a little pinched and wan from the evening's toil, as he said, "Come in!"

The door opened; Dick walked in quickly, shut it, and stood before it. The boy stood upright, a solemn, almost impersonal figure. In his humility he loomed and seemed to fill the tidy little room.

Blaisdell! At that surprising entrance a pointed flame of jealousy and self-protecting caution leaped in Percy's mind. The remembrance of his pledge was there, too, but mostly resentment at so sudden, so unexpected an encounter. His pride steeled itself again; he had promised, he would play the game. Whatever could have brought the boy there into

his own room! He wished it were not so small, that he could get further away from him.

"Good evening?" he began uncertainly.

The boy was breathing heavily as though he had been running, his eyes strained and perplexed as if he were striving for speech and could find no utterance. Percy felt something tense and unusual in him; it further startled and bewildered him, made him excessively uncomfortable. He was determined, no matter what the cost, to avoid a scene. His spirit curled up, like the leaves of a sensitive plant, at the very thought of that.

"Sit down, won't you? You've come about your cut yesterday morning?"

"I'm ashamed!" Dick broke out. "I've come to say that I'm ashamed."

"My dear fellow, a cut's no such hopeless thing."

"It's not the cut; it's about last Tuesday night. I'm——"

Percy suddenly got up.

"Tuesday night! Oh, I see, at Miss Morland's. You, you were coming to apologize? It you will forget it I shall be only too glad to."

"Oh, God," said Dick, "He doesn't understand! I don't know how to make him!"

Percy's dazed eyes became used now to the dim light and for the first time he really saw him. One look at Blaisdell's face and he marvelled; it was as if the refiner's fire had passed over it, leaving it pale but glowing with an inward light.

"What's the matter with you, Blaisdell? What's happened?"

"You heard Monty Ward yesterday morning in the yard! You know—you know what I did——"

"Just a moment, Blaisdell," said Percy, quickly. "I don't know what you're talking about. I haven't seen Ward except in class."

"But you heard him with Phil——"

"I remember they were laughing and talking behind me.

I don't know what about. So far as I'm aware there's no reason why you should be telling me anything to-night. Be careful, Blaisdell!"

"I've got to tell you! I thought you knew already, but that wasn't the reason. It makes it harder, but it doesn't alter things. I was a lie last Tuesday night. I shan't ever get to be real unless I pay for it! I must drink what I've brewed! I wasn't fit to be there! You were right to be sore over it. She—she—she didn't know what I am!"

"He hath delivered mine enemy into my hands!" was singing in Percy's ears. His eyes were steel-bright again. But Dick was going on.

"Oh, sir. I went away from that place and her that night and went—and went——"

"Blaisdell," Percy broke in sharply, "you're meaning to tell me of something that disturbs you that happened Tuesday night—confess—apologize. I don't want you to! Indeed, I won't let you do it."

No one could have been more surprised than he himself at his own words. He was fairly appalled to hear them. And then he was profoundly grateful. He had come near to utter meanness but he had pulled up in time. He seemed to find himself, then. The jealousy died down, and, as jealousy died, truer penetration came to take its place. He was ready now, for what else this amazing interview might bring. He felt somewhat sorry for the lad; sure of himself and therefore able to be sorry for the boy. His mind went back to the day, three years before, when he had first met him.

"Oh, sir, don't stop me! I must get right; I've got to tell the truth to respect myself. To-night's my one chance! I can do it now—you daren't stop me!"

"You've already told the truth. Your presence here, the sort of suffering that brings you, is doing that. I know what you are as well as you do, better perhaps than you do, to-night. I don't want to know what you've done. I'm not the one to talk to about it."

"Oh, no one else!" said Dick piteously. "Who else?"

"I don't think anyone else. I didn't make myself clear. And please sit down! Come, you must! Will you smoke?"

"It makes me sick to think of it!"

"All right. I don't want to, either. Now, let's take it quietly and sensibly and talk together as man to man. The reason I said I was not the one to speak to about it was because I've never been drunk nor disreputable nor—nor done anything of what you may have done that night which might reflect upon other people. I'm not your judge, man! I don't know—I've never been there. I can't hear; I can't estimate or condemn."

"I want to atone! Help me to start out!"

"Try," said Percy uncomfortably, "not to talk about it so entirely in terms of feeling. You want to turn over a new leaf? If you wish it I will give you a hand—if there's any way I can."

"But we're not on the same level. I came to—to humble myself."

"That's a bad business, Blaisdell. If we're not on a common level I can't do anything for you." He paused. "I suppose," he went on with some difficulty, "the—the ancient, terrible, voices called——" he looked up and concluded stiffly. "You see, they—don't tempt me—the same way. So there we are!"

He stopped abruptly at that as though he were frightened at what he might just have said. The boy looked at him, wonderingly.

"You're trusting me," he said, "trusting me!"

"Yes," said Percy rather stiffly, "why shouldn't I? I don't suppose you knew it, but when you came in that door, to-night, you trusted me. Blaisdell, tell me, what—what made you do it?"

Dick's hands clenched unconsciously. He moved a bit farther away from the trim figure, his feet shifted.

"I—I tried to find help. But I couldn't and gave up. Then help was—was given to me."

Embarrassed silence on Percy's part. A stubborn evasion,

half pitying, half irritated, in his eyes. Then his voice, very patient, very kindly.

"You mean," awkwardly, "that you've—you've 'got religion,' as they say? That you think—you feel, I mean—that you're in touch with something outside our world and our experience?"

"I know," said Dick.

"You've got the will to start out again? Take it—take it as that, can't you? It's worth doing for its own sake. Build on that, Blaisdell. Then you won't be disillusioned in the end."

"I should be fooled if I took it that way, sir. It's because it's not my will that's doing it that I'm not afraid."

"But—but, my dear boy. The last thing I want to do, of course, is to break down anything worth anything to you. But it's only fair and right to make sure that you start out on some basis that we can be certain of. You know—of course, you don't know now, but sooner or later you will—that, in the very nature of things, we can't be sure of God."

"But I am," said Dick. "He's—here! I guess I'd better be going, now."

Percy looked at the passionate, unruly strength which lay behind that momentary and unconscious dignity; there was the faintest, involuntary shrugging of his shoulders.

"Well," he said with kindly acquiescence, "we won't argue about it, anyway. And it is late. You must get home and into bed."

"I must work," said Dick. "There's a long road ahead. I want to work."

"But not to-night," said Percy decisively. He was unutterably relieved to get away from that other topic and to return to a more familiar speech and attitude. "I never expected to urge the undergraduate to cease from his labors. But you musn't try to work, to-night. I want a breath of air myself. I'll walk over with you."

Which he did, and even climbed the stairs to the study door. He could not have said just why except that beneath

his unshaken skepticism as to the nature and meaning of Dick's experience that evening he still felt something to-night in the boy that was startling and incomprehensible. It annoyed him that he could neither define nor deny it, and so it somewhat soothed and justified him to stress the abnormal nature and unpredictable consequences of such an emotional upheaval. Such a capacity for anguish and exaltation were utterly beyond him; who could foresee what their after effects might be? The boy might collapse or faint upon the stairs. Certainly he was called upon to look after him.

He said "good-night" at the head of the entry, but Dick added:

"I'd like to shake hands."

"Certainly," said Percy stiffly.

The study was dark, save for the smouldering fire. Dick noticed that again Phil was out—something unusual at that hour. But he was really too weary and far gone to take in the significance of anything. It seemed as if his clothes dropped from him as he took them off. He got into his sleeping suit and quite unconsciously fell upon his knees beside the bed. It was many years since he had discontinued the childhood custom. Indeed, until this evening he probably had never prayed, but to-night prayer seemed a part of him, inevitable.

And then, almost before his head had touched the pillow he was asleep, a deep untroubled sleep, the relaxed and dreamless sleep of utterly exhausted youth.

VIII

FRIDAY was one of those still-breathing days, in mid-November, when the late Fall stands in silent expectation at the gate of Winter. Phil and Monty, released from Upper Mass, and History I, were standing on the sloping steps of Mathews, Monty perfecting the latest creases in in his new Fedora, Phil gazing down the long vista of the College Yard, as it lay, sleeping, in the pale sunshine of the afternoon. The shapely branches of the leafless elms threw long, tremulous shadows across the white walls of University, where patches of crimson ivy still stained the severe whiteness of the granite blocks. Little groups of men, mere gathering and dissolving dots, appeared and disappeared before the bulletins nailed to the fluted pilasters on either side of its arched entrances. From before the worn, rose-tinted front of Hollis came the melancholy creak of the pump handle, sudden splashes of water, intermittent fragments of emphatic, vigorous voices. But sound and movement were as a mere ripple upon the deep surface of the Yard's repose, that sedate and conscious quiet which seemed centuries old. The ancient enclosure was far withdrawn from the noise of trade and barter, the trivial bustle of the Square. It seemed to be waiting, forever ready to lay the spell of its proudly restraining spirit upon the swiftly passing generations of youth, as, each in their turn, they should frequent its crossing and recrossing paths.

"Monty," said Phil, "to-day's the first time I've ever really seen this place."

"We walk by faith, not sight, brethren. Let us now sing hymn 223, verses 1, 2, and 7."

"Well, that's about it. I wish you'd occasionally be se-

rious! I've just accepted it before. Of course it was all wonderful, right, exactly as it should be. And now the thing that's me is really seeing it, and I don't know whether I like it or not!"

"What troubles the new-born babe? Would it be the little squirrels gamboling on the green, or these faintly-Gothic porches of your own abode?"

Phil's eyes were on Stoughton and Holworthy, the austere and impersonal aloofness of those bare buildings with their subtle pride of under statement.

"It looks so established, so set, so fixed! It just lays a hand on you and says, 'Here are the ancient ways; walk in them.' I feel like questioning, rebelling. I sort of got free Wednesday night—up there in Morland's rooms. And it was good!"

"You certainly untied your tongue!" said Monty gloomily.

"I felt as if I were being turned upside down—filled with new things, stirrings, impulses. I've been in a ferment ever since. I want to do something and don't know what it is I want to do! You can bet Dick noticed the change in me! I never saw him so meek and quiet as he was yesterday. I showed him where he got off, let me tell you! I guess he realizes now that he has no boy to deal with any longer!"

"Cheeky beggar!" said Monty. "But, do you know, I like him. He's so outrageous when he's on the rampage. He sure gives you a run for your money!"

"Well, I'm going to give him a run for his now. Say, Monty——"

"Say on, my lord!"

"Say, did it strike you there was something positively creepy about that room of Morland's? It had me fascinated and doubtful all at the same time—as if you liked it, and didn't like it, too."

"Huh!" said Monty, "nothing to do with the room. Just Morland, himself, and his fool notions. I've been sleeping on it, too. He's a smooth one!"

"I wonder if they are 'fool.' You know, when I got home that night and came back to earth I didn't know where I was. As though that one evening had made all the things I thought great seem ridiculous and all the big things look cheap. You know you always say your prayers before you turn in——"

"Now I lay me down to sleep," chanted Monty, hands folded over his plump person. "No, I don't know it. Still, I believe in it."

"Well, last night it came over me, 'Why, you're just running with the crowd, doing as you've been told. Why not assert yourself? This praying isn't great and different, it's what every one does—it's just common.'"

"'Common people do not pray, my Lord; they only beg.'"

"What's that?"

"Heard it in a play last week written by a man named Shaw. Jack Trowbridge says he's a radical and got some sense. That made Dad so mad he had to see it, so I trotted along after. Leading lady makes her entrance by falling in through the roof of the conservatory and scattering glass all over the orchestra. Nifty, I'll call it! Honest, Phil, I don't know what you're driving at!"

"You think it was all hot air he was getting off, Wednesday night?"

"Warm air, warm!" said Monty. "Forget it!"

"I don't know," said Phil. "But I know I'm going to try it and find out. I feel stuffy; let's go over to the gym!"

Monty lifted his whistle to a piercing shrillness, and they ambled across the street into Hemenway. It was crowded for the afternoon's exercises, filled with activity and pleasant noises; hilarious young voices, the hum of pulleys, the patter of swift feet, the pungent smell of half-aired, sweat-stained jerseys. They made their way to the locker room. "There's Trowbridge, now!" whispered Monty as a tall, ruddy fellow, with bold, steady eyes and a grim mouth, passed them. He was a famous athlete, half-back on the

Varsity, a college hero. They watched him nodding here and there, stopping for a moment to talk gravely about the next day's practice with a gleaming youth fresh from the shower. Phil eyed Trowbridge, half indifferent, half envious. He too wanted recognition and leadership, but not that kind; he was faintly resentful that in this little, vivid world that kind counted for so much. Still, Trowbridge had more than brawn and muscle, he knew that.

Presently, in drawers and sweaters the boys came back to the main room. Monty glanced toward the running track.

"Well, I'll be darned!" he cried. "Will you see that!"

Phil looked up. There was Dick, shoulders back, chest forward, padding around the running gallery, his straight legs rising and falling as regularly as pistons.

"Ever see him here before?"

"No," said Phil, "and I don't want to see him now! Come downstairs and play squash; I want to forget him!"

An hour afterward they emerged into the gathering twilight, relaxed and hungry.

"I'm chasing off to feed," said Phil. "Got a history conference at seven."

"Digestion is the better part of valor!" crowed Monty. "But me for my glad rags. I've got to go home for dinner and take little sister Mary afterward to the Hunnewell's dance, for,

"Mary has a little lamb,
Its fleece like driven snow,
And everywhere that Mary's sent
This lamb has got to go!

Thus saith the pater familias!" He clicked his heels and came to attention. "Hail, Cæsar, and farewell!"

Nor was his the only mind on pleasure bent that evening. Sitting in the old parlor with her mother, Felicia was talking about the dance as the evening mail came in. There were two letters from Cambridge. She opened her brother's first and read it, a faintly derisive smile hovering on her lips.

"Mother! I shall have to tell Francis that curiosity once killed a cat. I asked him to look up one of the freshmen for me and now he wants to know why. He's so polite about it that he evidently wants to know badly, and just as evidently he expects that I won't tell him."

"What freshman, dear?"

"A boy named Philip Spenser."

"And what did you want to know about him?"

"What he's like."

"Well?"

"He's rooming with Dick Blaisdell and I was interested."

Mrs. Morland's mouth closed tightly.

"I thank you, Felicia."

The girl reached quietly for the paper cutter and opened Percy's missive. "Dear Miss Morland," it ran, "I trust you have not forgotten that I have three dances to-night, including the last one, and I am proposing for myself the honor of seeing you home. I have spoken to your brother about it and it fits in all right with his plans to go back with the Hunnewells. I also want to tell you that I saw Richard Blaisdell last night. It appears, by the way, that Monty Ward is a chum of his roommate. But we will speak of that this evening. What I think of most is that I am soon going to see you again."

She dropped the letter in her lap, considering. Then:

"I'm going to wear my fresh frock to-night, Mother, and my turquoises. You know it's a big affair and going to be in the new ballroom at the Somerset."

"It does seem strange to me that the Hunnewells should have it out of their own house. It isn't as though they didn't have double drawing-rooms there. I don't much like your dancing in a semi-public place. But I suppose that's the new way of doing things."

"Be calm, Mother dear! It will be a calm evening with Mrs. Hunnewell, incased in dignity and black velvet, presiding! And oh, how demure the boys will be when they prance up to greet her!"

"Who is to be there, dear?"

"Why, Reggie Ames, and I rather think Monty Ward, and Jack, and, of course, Francis and Percy Barrett——"

"I mean of the girls, dear."

"Oh, the same old set! I must go up and dress; the carriage is coming at half-past eight."

"I don't understand their beginning at such late hours! Nor why the Hunnewells give in to it! There's no need of their doing it. I hope you will leave not later than twelve, dear."

"No, Mother; thanks to Percy Barrett, I won't. I don't see Francis going at that hour!"

It was nine o'clock when Felicia stepped out upon the floor, demure and dangerous, gardenias in her belt, her eyes above them gay and dark and bright. Monty bowed low before her.

"Princess, is this dance taken?"

"Do pages dance with princesses?" she answered, smiling.

Then, as they were threading their way around the crowded room, Monty, holding her with careful ease, began:

"Isn't this a ripping affair! Some difference from trying to do this sort of thing in a private house! You're always either knocking down the mantelpiece, or wrinkling up the canvas, or bumping into somebody there. We younger fellows pass up the house dances if we can. They're absolutely out of date!"

"Isn't Lucy stunning in her pearls and that dream of a dress! I wouldn't have thought she could wear that color. And such music!"

"Sure! It's Stowell's orchestra. You can't get that either in these family-parlor dances; not room enough for it. This is certainly the real thing! After a man gets to college he begins to get a line on things and understand."

"Why, of course, Monty! You're a Harvardian!" she laughed gaily. "I knew there was a difference! Are there some good men in the new class?"

"Corking! It's easily the best class that ever came into college—everyone says so. Tip-top fellows! We're making friends now that are going to last a life-time. I say, I wish a fellow I know that came down from the Latin School in Pittsfield were here to-night. Awfully quiet chap; doesn't know many of our set; but he's a man I'd be willing to introduce to you. And, oh, what he has wished on him for a roommate!"

"Another freshman?"

"No, a senior. A great mistake I call it to room with a man out of your own class, especially an upper classman. Of course, it isn't often done."

Monty straightened his tie with elaborate carelessness, and thrust out his plump chin. He was doing the man of the world all right! Careless, easy, sophisticated—Gee, how college did change one!

"It's worse because the man's rather gone down hill this year. I saw him in town Tuesday midnight, after our dinner. Some of us younger men went about a bit afterward, before we turned in. Well, for a senior, he was making a spectacle of himself! And that's the sort of thing outsiders judge the college by!"

"Tuesday night?" said Felicia suddenly. "Who is the freshman you're talking about, Monty?"

"His name's Philip Spenser, cousin of the Moffats. I think Archie engineered the roommate business. Not that he could have seen how it would turn out! Still, I should think he'd have had more judgment!"

The dance had ended and they were sitting on the low dais which ran around the edge of the room. The girl's face was flushed, her eyes brilliant, one tiny shoe-tip tapping on the raised floor.

"Monty, do tell me what you mean! We girls have so little chance to know what's going on in the world, the way you boys do. Just what does a man have in mind when he says of another fellow that he was 'making a spectacle of himself'?"

The sands of Monty's newly found aplomb were beginning to run low. "Gee! I've let myself in for something," he thought. "What an ass I was! Darn these women!" The deadly difference between a boy of eighteen and a girl of twenty-two loomed before him. She terrified him.

"You know it isn't the kind of thing—kind of thing"—his face was probably getting purple! he wanted to brain her on the spot—"kind of a thing one talks to a nice girl about."

'Nonsense, Monty, I'm not a 'nice girl.' (His last shreds of presence of mind deserted him at that.) "I'm an intelligent human being. I suppose you mean," calmly, "that he was drunk and boisterous."

"That's—that's about it!"

"About it? Of course there was someone with him?"

"Decent fellows don't go on like that alone!"

"But 'decent' fellows do—do break loose sometimes. I see. Who was with him?"

Under pretence of smoothing his hair Monty brushed the beads of perspiration from his brow. Nice looking gloves he'd have by the end of the evening if this kept on!

"There's always a lot of folks in a restaurant like Marliave's."

"Oh, I see! I don't understand that kind of a girl," said Felicia steadily.

"I didn't say anything about girls! Of course you couldn't understand them! They're, they're not so awful bad. They just dance and sing a little and when the old man shuts up they laugh and forget it and you take a cab home from Bowdoin Square—if you're lucky enough to find one!"

The music began again and he saw Jack approaching for the second dance. "My eye!" he breathed as he scurried away. "I feel like a marked down, plugged up, counterfeit nickel! Lord!" he swore to himself with terrifying and exhilarating facility, "what a mess I've made of it!"

Toward the middle of the evening Percy, claiming his second dance, came up to her. Her eyes were flashing, her smile dazzling, yet he thought she looked tired.

"It's frightfully hot here; can't we sit out this dance?"

"I'm sure I'd do anything as simple as that, Percy, to give you a breath of fresh air. Where?"

"There's a series of reception rooms arranged with palms and couches."

"For mother's sake," she laughed as they went out, "we must find some place at once inconspicuous and visible. My throat is simply parched! Do get me some frappé!"

When he returned he found her sitting in a big chair drawn up at right angles to the sofa.

"I got Jack to bring this over; we can talk so much easier facing each other. Isn't it a marvelous dance, and isn't Lucy stunning in her pearls and that dream of a dress!"

"I like turquoises better," said Percy. "What a relief to sit down in comparative quiet and really say something! I want to tell you first about Dick Blaisdell."

"Oh, I had hoped it had been I who was on your mind!"

"I've been thinking about what might be on yours," he answered calmly. "You see, men are not always egotists!"

"Far be it from me to decry masculine unselfishness! What about Mr. Richard Blaisdell?"

"He came to see me last night," said Percy slowly. "He was frank and friendly. I think that I was, too. I don't imagine that you'll see much, perhaps nothing, of him this Winter. He's made up his mind to work and—make some change in his way of living. I ought to say that I think you're a chief cause in that. I take it that he's not been living very—very sensibly. But I was sure last night that at the bottom he's straight. He's got a big task on his hands if he's to pull up now. I don't know whether he can or not, but I'd like to help him, and, if I can, I shall."

"A very careful statement, Mr. Instructor!" said Felicia. "How men do stand together!" And then, leaning forward, "I understand he was drunk on Tuesday night."

There was a dangerous light in her eyes. He looked at her in genuine amazement.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Wasn't he? Didn't he come and tell you about it?"

"He told me nothing whatever, that is, nothing specific about that evening. He might have, perhaps, if I had let him. Naturally, I didn't."

Her composure wavered a little at the cool, decisive tone.

"How are you going to help him if you don't know what the trouble is?"

"You don't do it by quizzing a man, or letting him make a father-confessor of you! You know that yourself. If it's to be done at all it's not by patronage nor any paternal business. I suppose it's by friendship."

"And I don't suppose you'd let pride interfere with friendship even when some one whom you'd received did that sort of thing right afterward?"

"I can't answer that for you. I could for a man. If you have faith I suppose it has to come before pride, doesn't it?"

"And you don't think that sort of thing necessarily interferes with faith and friendship?"

"Not with—*friendship,*" he answered coolly. "That is, as long as he doesn't lie down under it."

"You mean that defeat isn't surrender?"

"That's a romantic statement of the distinction," he said briefly.

In his present mood she'd get no help from him in this *dea ex machina* business. It was amazing how women did want to have their finger in everything. He'd told her he'd keep an eye on Dick, what more did she want? The girl really tortured him, tore him in two, part of him disapproving, even cynically amused at, this half romantic, half maternal boldness of her, the rest of him desiring her dreadfully in spite of it, and lashing him for his inconsistency. Suddenly he turned to her:

"I don't think women ought to talk about men's—men's affairs any more than our sort of men talk about women's. I've told you what I think; he's straight at heart and he's taken another hitch in his belt and turned around. So, you

must decide your own attitude toward him, I suppose, on that."

"You really think we're not different sorts of beings, don't you? Sounds like a man! All right, I don't want to hear another word about him or to think of him to-night. What fascinating music! Doesn't it sound jolly from here!"

"Shall we go back?" said Percy disappointedly.

"I thought it was 'frightfully hot' in there," she cried. "Why not sit here?"

"You know very well I'd rather!"

"I wonder," she said evenly, "I wonder? One doesn't feel the entire approval of the Lord and Master of creation to-night! But you've answered my question."

"What question?"

"What it means to be loyal to friends. I don't know whether I agree. Perhaps it's better to stay by your own," she looked around her at the familiar scene, the familiar faces, that secure and inbred company, "those whom we know and trust." Just then Francis, slim and elegant and faun-like, passed down the corridor, Lucy Hunnewell on his arm. He looked in, waving a careless, graceful salute. "No," she added, "that's nonsense! People are all alike, all alike, everywhere. I'd rather go and exchange the quiet pool for the river, for a 'current,' as you called it the other night, that's flowing somewhere!"

"I believe I would, too," he answered readily. "I may remind you of that some time. Here comes young Ames. I suppose he has the next. Don't you want to be tired and call it off?"

"Percy Barrett! He's the best dancer here. Oh, Reggie, let's do this one double tempo, shall we?"

Just as she was leaving when the tenth dance was over, Francis sauntered up.

"Look what it is to have so popular a sister," he announced, "I've been kept from even seeing you all the evening."

"Poor Francis! And you such a model brother, and so prompt in answering letters!"

"Oh, have you got it already?" he said carelessly.

"In the evening's mail. And now that I'm seeing you I won't have to write an answer; I can tell it to you now."

"All right; let me take you out to the carriage while Dr. Barrett's putting on his muffler."

"He's coming, now, dear Francis, and it won't take that long to do it. Have a tea for me and ask the freshman to it. Oh, and be sure to tell Lucy how stunning she is in her pearls and that dream of a dress! Good night!"

But all the way home, in the carriage, she shivered as with some inward cold.

IX

FRANCIS was in no amiable mood as he returned to the ballroom. She knew him too well; never said so, and so never gave the opening for denial or defense. The consciousness of that intimate knowledge, such as each has of the other in family life, whipped irritation to vindictive anger. "Clever little sister will wait long for that tea," he thought. "Perhaps if she waits long enough she'll tell me what she wants it for!"

But, in any case, it would have been indefinitely postponed. The cumbrous academic machine gathered momentum slowly, but once the University was fairly under way its own interests and occupations swept all before them. The Freshman Friday evenings, and the debutante dances at Milton and the Back Bay, from which jaded and blasé youths returned across the bridge at three or five in the morning; the week-ends at neighboring country houses, the endless 'student activities,'—all sped the flying feet of time. The hour examinations over and the football season closed, the holidays glowed brightly ahead. Once they were past and the exhausted college had returned to its wonted tasks, the mid-year period with its twenty days of three-hour tests loomed up, darkening the horizon of the undergraduate mind.

So Monty sped hither and yon on joy and pleasure bent. Morland, as the year waxed, retired and arose later and later, and Phil went his new and troubling way. Each day there was something 'different' to attempt, and each day something more of slowly hardening audacity in the doing of it. He began to love the daring phrase, the supercilious denial; liberty was absence of restraint, the unlimited was the goal of thought and imagination.

But not of conduct. By a curious inconsistency, an instinct so profound as to be unconscious, he never as yet included that. But learning how to damn with faint praise, or to assent with civil leer, seemed witnesses to a liberated intellect, a truly urbane spirit! There was a sort of inverted pleasure in carelessly rejecting once cherished standards, in his aggressive, so aggressive, scorn of whatever was simple or established or revered. He thought the sense of expansion which this produced in him was progress. He became acutely self-conscious, fascinated by self-exploration; held many imaginary conversations between himself and some fancied interlocuter. Conversations in which he by no means figured as the duller participant.

"What's got into you?" said Monty. "A fellow used to know where to find you!"

"What a deadly bore I must have been! What fools we are actually to encourage the college in trying to make us into machine products!"

"And this," said Monty, rolling his eyes upward, "from our model freshman!"

"Models are inferior imitations of originals, my dear boy. You can bet your life I'm through with them. I'm going to be myself!"

"I dare say I'm dippy," said Monty shortly, "but you never seemed less like yourself to me than now."

Phil paid no heed; what dominated his days were the not infrequent calls on Morland. He seemed to find release as soon as he entered those bare and discreetly quiet rooms, became bold, assertive, even irritably dogmatic at times. He had nothing published as yet, seemed no nearer that than at the beginning. But the senior often talked to him about his work. "Get away from convention. Say what you really feel. Don't be frightened at it. If you can't crystallize it we'll talk it over together and the phrases will come."

He suggested little reading to the lad, as though not sure yet as to what it was expedient to offer. But always he encouraged Phil to talk about himself, and sometimes he would

subtly question. So the freshman soon learned how to turn a conviction into an epigram, an ideal into a bon mot. It was fascinating, this intellectual debauchery; let graybeards and slow pokes find dull reasons for safe conduct, his was the sham-puncturing raillery of the youthful gods! Sometimes, when witty innuendo and clever ridicule spontaneously phrased themselves, he felt quite intoxicated. What power he had! It was as though he were handling the forbidden fruits, yet never tasting them. Here was all the license without the ensuing dust and ashes in the mouth.

But there was an inflexible streak in him, a native incapacity for grosser evil, a profound unconsciousness of it. And there were some things his mind never played with, certain convictions, notably of what he called "honor" and "decency," which were never touched. Gradually Morland learned the barriers where fascination ceased, and through which neither suggestion nor ridicule could penetrate; and as he learned it, it seemed as if his interest lessened. If Francis was sure of anything about himself it was that he was a "gentleman." He would never "lead" a boy into anything! But what that self-indulgent will desired was to prove that he could lead him anywhere should he so desire. Power securely in his hand, power voluntarily unused, that was the acme of delight! And so a slow irritation grew in him at that inflexible streak, and at times Phil had a feeling of not knowing quite where he stood with the older man. There was a covert restlessness in his manner of late, yet he never doubted that he trusted Morland implicitly, and he assured himself that he was gloriously happy.

And, as for Dick, he was walking a steep path which seemed to wind upward all the way, and he was walking it alone. He was saying very little these days, had become steadier and simpler in appearance, the flesh on the flushed, heavy face grown hard and thinner; and sometimes he looked like a grave child, and sometimes like the beginnings of an able man. Phil regarded him with indifferent contempt. "I'd be one thing or the other!" he thought loftily. "At

least, he used to be provocative, not merely boresome." And Dick's work was more uneven, less satisfactory than before. Especially, in the French, his deliberate neglect in the earlier stages of the course had made an irretrievable handicap which was growing heavier with the weeks. So that in the tasks set and scrutinized by Dr. Barrett, in which above all others he was desperately anxious to do well, he was most obviously deficient.

He was not surprised, therefore, when Percy motioned to him to remain after class one day, and as the men filed out he went up doggedly to his instructor's desk. He looked worn and haggard that morning, and his eyes, steadily as they met the older man's, were dark and sombre as of old. Percy regarded him for a moment and then put out his hand across the table. Dick took it listlessly.

"A word about your work, Blaisdell. I know you've not been shirking it lately, but you are getting seriously behind."

"Yes, sir; I expect I shall flunk again at the Mid-Years."

"Why haven't you been around to see me about it?"

"Oh, I don't know. Got a good deal on my hands just now. I guess I didn't think it would be any use."

Underneath the directness and the simplicity Percy felt the mortal weariness of his voice.

"Would a little work together in the French help some? If you'd care to come to my rooms Tuesday nights, say at 9:30, from now until the exams, I think we can get the irregular verbs and declensions straightened out and add a bit to your vocabulary as well. It would be a pleasure to coach you."

The boy's face twitched suddenly.

"Sure, I'll come! Thank you!" The mask of self-control slipped for a moment. "Is Miss Morland well? I don't suppose she ever asks about me?"

If Dick's face was worn and sombre, there was something pinched and strained in Percy's as he looked at him across the desk.

"Yes, she's inquired more than once for you. That's one

reason why I called you up, now. She asked me yesterday to tell you that she hoped you would soon be coming over again."

"I—I certainly appreciate your giving me that message!"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Naturally, you'd understand I'm not going!"

"Not going?"

"I'll say so. I'm not going out there again until—until I know, for sure, just where I am. Least I can do, now."

"Of course, you must decide for yourself. But is it a fair way to treat one's friends?"

"I couldn't go now. I'd be breaking my own word to myself. But I'll have a chance some time; there's a time coming when I'm going back there again. I don't know when or how," he continued, a curious musing strain creeping into his voice, "but I can tell it's coming. I keep thinking of that when it's hardest," he went on with what was to Percy that incomprehensible simplicity. "I say 'You must hold on so as to be able to take your chance when it comes!' If Miss Morland should ask again please tell her that I want to come, and that when I can bring her something I'm going to."

He turned and was gone.

"'When I can bring her something——'" said Percy to himself as he left the building. "There's that same strain of mysticism in him that came out on that first amazing night. The boy certainly isn't well balanced; just can't do things sensibly or moderately; must be a saint if he's not to be a sensualist. I dare say it is that way with some. I should think he was in danger of a break under it. Why make it so hard?"

It was a brilliant winter's day, and the new fallen snow lay billowed across the Yard. In the midst of its dazzling whiteness the black elm-boles rose stark and tapering, and the ancient dormitories, with their rose-red bricks, stood out gay and bright like the fronts of children's playhouses. The old enclosure, in its sharp and bare simplicity, seemed

a pure survival from Colonial days. There was a clear ring in all the sounds of life. But there was no vital spring, to match the bracing weather, in Percy's step as he walked unheeding to his rooms. They seemed dull and drab after the blinding splendor without. For underneath he was sick at heart. What kind of an attitude was he to maintain—could he maintain—toward Blaisdell? He felt himself in an impossible position; what right had she to push them together so? Was it a spice of feminine cruelty such as makes the cat, not knowing its cat-likeness, play with the helpless mouse? Or was it just what he tried to make it seem—an innocently sentimental love of adventuring in the manipulation of other lives with no proper understanding of its consequences or the indefensibleness of such procedure? Or did she, wearied of her chilled and perfected environment, find a deeper attraction in the passionate vitality, the elemental directness, of the lad? That was intolerable to the precise and fastidious man to contemplate. Felicia understood his own feelings toward her, he knew well. But she held him off; she did not absolutely discourage him, but always she held him off. Perhaps she didn't know her own mind. She was consistently bright and friendly, too friendly; sympathetic and comprehending, but never shy, never personal, never intimate nowadays.

Again his thoughts traveled back to Dick. How was he to define and clarify his attitude toward him? It was unbearable that a younger man, an undergraduate under his own instruction, should be the third person in this comedy. His dignity was precious in his eyes; it was unfair of life to make such demands upon his chivalry, his justice, his pride. It was not hard to see what was Blaisdell's feeling toward her! Should he cut his Gordian knot, propose, get his definite answer, know where he stood? But it was perilous to forestall fate, and perhaps lose what chance, or time, or patience, might bring. It was his instinct to distrust action. Who could tell yet how Dick would turn out? If he only knew how real, and of just what sort, was her interest

in the boy. How much longer could both of them maintain this precarious peace? He wondered if they who sit in the heavens, derisively weaving the destinies of men, do laugh?

"How much chance have I?" he asked himself. "Could I blame her if she liked him, provided, always provided, that he makes good. He hasn't yet, that's one thing." He straightened his slight figure. "Anyway, whatever happens, I must try to act white."

That night, after an hour's intensive coaching, as Dick was about to go, Percy stopped him.

"Don't leave just yet—that is, not unless you want to. I'd be glad to hear a little about how it's going."

"I guess you can see what it's like, sir. I haven't let go since that night I was up here, and I don't mean to. But——"

"That was what you meant when you said you'd 'got a lot on your hands just now'?"

"I meant you can't fight and study both. I get restless. Always something creeping, mounting, pulling inside you that just about drives you mad! I can't settle down to anything then; I can't think; I can't sit still. Sometimes I go out and walk it off. I've walked I don't know how many miles these last six weeks when I didn't hardly know where I was going—just kept one leg moving after the other. Then you get dog tired and the thing stops. Since the snow fell, whenever I could feel it coming on and I knew I was in for it, I'd go over to the gym and exercise all the afternoon. But it takes so much time! I don't know how to get my work done, too! After an afternoon like that, and a bath and a rub down, and something to eat—when I get into the study and put my head down by that hot lamp and try to fix my mind on my work, why, before I know it I'm half asleep! It seems as if I couldn't keep my eyes open! It tires me," he added simply, "that's what I do it for. I'm so stupid and so weary, I guess my roommate thinks me more fool than anything else now."

"I was going to ask about Spenser?" said Percy. "How are things going with you and him?"

"Oh—rotten! He used to hate me. But it's worse now; he just doesn't care one way or the other. I don't think he notices what's—what's on; or if he does, he doesn't understand. He's seen all the sawdust and he won't believe that there's anything else to see. He's gone daft on writing; spends hours working away at his themes and things. I suppose you know he's got a new friend?"

"Why, I understand he's seeing a good deal of Morland."

"Yes," said Dick grimly, "or, rather, Morland's seeing a good deal of him. Morland's beginning to run a series of 'Harvard Types' in the Monthly. The first one, called 'The Beginner,' came out yesterday. Well, it might just as well be a portrait of the kid! They say Morland's coming back here, next year, for graduate work—something in Politics and International Law. I've heard he wants to go into Diplomacy."

"Really?" said Percy con-committally. "Well, I can see how such a career would have its attractions for him."

"I think Phil's hoping to room with him, then!"

"I wouldn't worry over that. It's an extremely improbable contingency."

"Of course, Morland wouldn't dream of it! He'll not go on putting time on Phil after there's nothing more in it, for him. Francis has probably enjoyed him, but he doesn't care anything about him. In fact, I think he's beginning to let down on him now. They were going in to the Art Museum last Sunday afternoon. There's a picture on exhibition, either a copy or a replica, by Da Vinci—is that name straight?—of a portrait called 'Monna Lisa.' I guess Francis had raved to him about it. Well, he sent word on Saturday that he couldn't go. I think it's the first appointment Phil's had with him that he hasn't kept. So Phil asked Monty to go with him."

"Ward! Did he do it?"

Dick grinned.

"'Me spend Sunday afternoon going to see a painted lady! And me the grandson of a minister! Oh, fie, Philip,

fie!' Then he sort of exploded, 'No more for me just now of the infernal feminine!' I was in the room and I couldn't help ha-ha-ing. Phil was furious."

"That ridiculous boy is something of a bore, to me," said Percy. "But, he's a real Yankee. He's nobody's fool!"

Dick got up, weariness in his sombre eyes and manner. He paused for a grim laugh.

"And then I made an ass of myself. I get so horribly lonely, there's nothing to do here Sundays, that I got frightened and offered to go myself."

"What did he say, Blaisdell?"

"'Thank you. I don't think you'd like it.' Guess I'll be going now, sir. I'm—I'm much obliged to you for the help."

"So Francis Morland 2nd has chosen diplomacy!" Percy laughed derisively to himself as he walked over to the Cercle Francais meeting. "I can quite see him! Believes himself to that manor born! Imagines himself as a smart, young attaché, perambulating between the Quai d'Orsay and the Embassy, rooms at the Crillon, dejeuner under the Arcade, looking up from his *hors d'oeuvre* to please himself with the dome of the Invalides, floating in the gray-gold Parisian air, across the Place! Oh, yes! I can just see him! The thing to do is to get hold of Spenser, if we can; that lad's in for a rude awakening! Besides, I believe it will turn on him, in the end, whether or not Blaisdell holds out." There was an unconfessed relief, in his mind, at any device which meant helping Dick without entailing his further contact with Felicia. "Somehow we must get at that boy."

And, as if in answer to the thought, as he entered the formal, gray-panelled room which had just been done over for the Cercle, he ran directly into Morland. He was receiving congratulations on the sketch which had appeared in the *Monthly*.

"Corking bit of work!" Ames was saying as Percy entered. "You must have drawn from life, and had a good sitter, too!"

"Oh, boy!" said another. "How you do dissect the little freshman heart! Reggie's right; you sure got hold of stunning material."

"Yes," said Francis in his slow, soft voice, "I had some good material." Then he laughed. "And I'm just about living with it lately. Freshmen are naïve and tenacious creatures; they don't seem to know when you've had enough. That particular Pierian spring is about drained dry."

Percy, very much the young instructor as he entered the gathering, looked at him with cold distaste, but he resolved to tackle him. For Francis, already wearying of the boy, if he could be flattered, might not be unwilling to do something to turn the lad back toward his roommate.

"Morland," he said cordially, "I hear you are thinking of diplomacy. That means some work in my department next year. I shall look forward to it. You will have to be more than up in your French, you know." And then, as they drew apart into a corner of the room he continued: "By the way, I've been reading that clever sketch of yours in the *Monthly* and I fancy I know the fellow who suggested it. Wasn't it Philip Spenser? Did he enjoy," Percy laughed, "being 'dissected' to make a Harvard holiday?"

It was not a tactful ending to his sentence; Percy had slipped into it without meaning to. Morland's dark eyes looked up suave and inscrutable. He did not like the young instructor, partly because he had known him all his life and resented the restraints of this new official relationship And he was well aware that the young instructor did like his sister; there was a purr in his voice.

"Oh, do you know him? Yes, I think I did have him more or less in mind in writing it. In fact, as I read it over to him I fancy he thinks he's helped me a bit with it. I don't know that he recognizes himself in it,—a really modest chap, you know. I think he'll do something when he finds himself."

"That's interesting, because he's rather a grind, as I see him. I fancy he's an uncomfortable person to room with,

and knowing and admiring you as he does, I dare say you, better than anyone else, could keep him from making the usual freshman blunder!"

Morland had flushed at that phrase "to room with." He turned and looked at Percy a minute.

"'The usual freshman blunder?'" I don't think I follow you."

"I mean," said Percy easily, "that he judges his roommate by the standard of perfection. Put him wise to the folly and the unkindness of it. No one better than you could show him that no man is really seeing things straight if he's always the critic and the knocker. And I dare say he wouldn't take it from anyone but you."

There was a dangerous light in Morland's eyes; the voice was still suave but icy.

"Apparently the roommate stands in some need of criticism. Of course, one knows what some men are here!"

Percy's temper gave way at that.

"I shall have to reply that we know what some other men here try to make them, Morland. I know Blaisdell as well as Spenser; I happen to be teaching both of them. Just now he's holding a tight rein on himself with a grit that I dare say some of us have no conception of! Because the poor fellow can't entirely change his spots at a moment's notice Spenser throws him down. You're on the Senior Committee for Freshmen, aren't you?" he asked directly, "Then why not give Spenser a hint in this matter?"

Percy knew he had egregiously blundered. No one realized better than he that he was temperamentally unsuited for this sort of thing. It was probably amusing Morland, and yet his only thought had been how he might get at the boy. But Francis was thoroughly angry, a still, cold anger which made him feel he could not tell where it might strike. He looked at Percy with hostile, insolent eyes.

"Really, Dr. Barrett, it's awfully good of you to be telling me all this." He deliberately turned his back on Percy, and, crossing the room, joined the group by the window-seat.

"What'll the next 'type' be, Morland?" called out some one.

"I'm not sure," said Francis clearly, "but don't you like contrasts, especially if they're amusing? I'm thinking of 'The Graduate Student.'"

Percy was quite unmoved by his effrontery. Three months ago it would have aroused him to fury; now there was less anger than contempt in his eyes and heart. It occurred to him that it was an amazing thing that he should have deliberately put himself in a place where an undergraduate could venture to be so openly insolent. It was not long since his own self-love, that jealous, cautious pride, would have prevented that. Yet to-night, flouted by the dark and handsome youth, he found himself unruffled, undisturbed. He joined the larger group, quietly and at ease, tacitly claiming and as tacitly receiving the place among these graduates and upper-classmen which his official station warranted; and no conversation that evening was more trenchant or informative than his. He included Morland in his sallies as if nothing had passed between them.

But the dark light still smouldered under the senior's lashes. Returning to his room he said, suddenly, to himself:

"Damn Spenser! I'm getting sick of him! There's nothing there that I can get that I haven't now. That's always the way," he added darkly to his own heart. "First I like them and enjoy them, then when I get all there is I can't stand the sight of them!"

And Percy, traveling roomward, was also going over the events of the day and evening in his mind.

"There's only one other thing to try," he concluded, "and that is to have Mrs. and Miss Morland over for vespers and get Spenser in to meet them afterward at tea. I don't see how I can get it in this next fortnight. But she could do anything with him—or with any other freshman!"

He didn't want to do it, and that was one reason why he made up his mind he would. Besides, it seemed a favorable

device, and perhaps one reason why he was willing to try was because in the background of his mind, lay the consciousness that though among other men invited he should include Blaisdell, he was by no means sure that Blaisdell would come.

Entering his study he saw an envelope, lying face upward beneath the letter-slot. "Return to the President's Office, Van Buren, Illinois," caught his eye. He tore it open. Within was an invitation to an assistant-professorship in Romance Languages at the Western-University and the hope held out, if all went well, of a not too distant full professorship.

What was he to do about this opening? It would mean promotion, recognition, a chance to win his spurs. It would also mean leaving Cambridge and Boston. How could he leave before he knew not merely where he stood, but where he might or might not hope to stand, with the girl? To decide to leave now was to relinquish the battle. And the time was not ripe for pressing for a decision—he didn't dare, as yet. What was he to do?

On the desk lay the unfinished manuscript of his monograph, references and books piled beside it. For a month he had hardly touched it; he did not know when, in his present mood, he could really get absorbed in it again. If it were not out soon, someone might be ahead of him, the labor, so far as his career was concerned, wasted. But what was he to do? Something else had a strangle hold upon him.

He looked darkly about his rooms. He thought of the last year when girls were just a pleasant diversion from hard work; it seemed aeons away.

"I hate sex," he said to himself. "I wish there were no such thing. It's always interfering!"

X

TEN days later Percy felt that circumstances were forcing him to action. It was not his habit to put fortune to the test and stake all on a throw. He believed in the suspended judgment, and evaded the responsibilities of decision by magnifying them, let the complexity of human problems encourage the continued analysis that would excuse delay. His was the familiar, if unconscious, fatalism of the intellectualist; the only way to direct circumstances was through patient understanding of them. And so circumstances began to direct him.

To begin with, there was Dick. The lad had entered a harder phase of his struggle; the physical consequences of his long strife were beginning to show in him, and their inevitable reaction upon mind and spirit were pitiably clear. That dreamless and exhausted sleep, upon which hitherto he could depend, was commencing to desert him. The nerves, wrung by their long tension and deprived of their wonted stimulus, had begun to rebel, and broken nights, sometimes filled with fantastic and heart-shaking dreams, followed the weary and monotonous days. A little niggling pain, like a thread of fire, sometimes in his temple, sometimes between cheek and ear, began to throb each morning and to burn more steadily as the day wore on. A dull depression, closing in like a pall, was settling over him. Will and courage, like over-used tools, had become blunt and dull. Worst of all, that sense of external and sublime support appeared utterly to have deserted him. Like the springs which dry in mid-summer, so now, when the need was sorest, the Presence had left him, and all the world turned into an unknowing and unheeding desert again. And, with that withdrawal,

the shining vision of his self, free, vigorous, unsoiled, had vanished, too; it was only a slowly dimming remembrance with him now.

But still, sometimes doggedly, sometimes fiercely, day by day he pushed on. His youth had taken up the strife and, unconscious of its own heroism, kept grimly at it. The actual lure of appetite, the desire to drink, had lessened. The plasticity of youthful habits together with the accumulating decisions of the will, during the last two months, had seen to that. But the incentive to hold out and to keep on seemed to have departed. "It's no use praying!" he muttered one night as he was getting into bed. "Prayer isn't any good in this sort of thing."

Again it seemed more certain, as the days went on, that, while Percy's coaching would probably save his French, he was doomed to disaster in the coming tests in other things. There was a hunted look in his eyes as he came in now for his evening's help, the look of one whose inward vision was fixed on a slender store of fast-diminishing resources and who knew that when they were gone he should be at his wit's end indeed. Percy could not have believed it but he found that the stark reality of that inward strife had got at something fundamental in him, pulled at the roots of that manhood whose central strengths and weaknesses they shared together and bonds of loyalty and comradeship for the younger man were strengthening as the days went by. He felt compelled, for the honor of their common cause, to an active support. His pride and jealousy were dimmed by this. Even the suffering and uncertainty over his own predicament could not throw into eclipse that instinctive loyalty to the fighting spirit, the hard beset life.

"Jove!" he exclaimed to himself, "there certainly is sand and something absolutely real in a boy who can see an almost certain defeat ahead and yet fights right on up to the very threshold of it. I don't see how he does it! But it's telling badly on him. I suppose he ought to see her; he's certainly earned the right to! In any case I can only win her if she

prefers me to him and I hope he'll come in next week when she's here. I'm going to make that clear to him. He needs something that I can't give, nor any fool roommate either."

He fell into a rather bitter strain of musing after that, but he held to his resolution. The invitation which he had meant to convey after class was given with more particularity late one afternoon as Dick was about to leave the Mount Auburn Street rooms after an hour's French reviewing. Percy stopped him as he turned to go out into the gathering dusk of the early winter's evening.

"I'm having Miss Morland and her mother in next week after Vespers," he said. "Asking only a few men whom I really want, and you and your roommate are among them. I hope very much you'll be able to come. And I know," he added steadily and impersonally, "that Miss Morland does, too."

Dick looked at him dumbly, and it half rebuffed, half perplexed Percy to see something reproachful, almost supplicating in his eyes. Then he turned without a word and went away. But Percy knew what that look meant.

"He's not coming; and yet he's fighting for his life and nearly at the end of his rope, too. Why is it each man has to do it in his own way when it seems such folly to the other fellow? I've done my best, anyway. Now, I've a right to fight for my own! If he won't see her, I will. It's indefensible to drift longer. I've got to make some answer to Van Buren before long. If she turns me down I guess I'm man enough to stand up to it."

Meanwhile, as Dick came out into the cheerless winter's dusk of Mount Auburn Street there was a lifting passion and despair within his eyes, a slow fire mounting once more in mind and heart. Did Barrett know what a repressed craving, what a hungry longing that cordial and insistent invitation had started running wild? How could he fail to see that he had only precipitated yet another night of testing for mind and will? And he felt so weary, so physically and nervously incapable of meeting it! The accumulated

desire of the last two months was racing through his members. Once started, released by that well-meaning invitation, it was utterly beyond control and able to drown reason, memory, will, in its effacing tides.

The urge for some outlet of emotional self-expression rose like an audible cry within his heart. There had been nothing all these weary weeks but work and exercise and grim eternal busyness every waking hour; always holding on —ever holding on, never letting go! He knew that he did not hanker to let go basely, to release all that pent-up inner life in dissipation. He wanted some chance to express himself decently and honorably, some opportunity such as is the inalienable right of any youth to utter his heart and consecrate his natural desires. It seemed as if his spirit cried aloud for some one to whom his whole heart, without wrong or fear or shame, might naturally be opened. God! Did he want to see her!

He felt as if he must, but all the while, in that strange heart of his, he knew that he must not. He had made a pact with his own soul, sworn that if he might be saved from self-hatred and despair he would take his punishment until he had walked to the very end of this rugged path and his hold upon himself was sure. He knew Heaven or Hell for him hung on whether that self-made pact should be kept or thrown away. He had promised his own spirit, on that night when he had hated himself and wanted to die, that if he might regain his manhood he would never see her again until victory was sure and he could bring some tangible evidence of it in his hands. And he knew that it was not sure yet. Indeed, he had somehow felt of late that, when he had held out as long as he knew how, he was then to go down, broken, before the many spears. Light, peace, victory,— the words sounded less of hope than mockery in his ears. No! no! he could not go! Deep dictates of his own spirit held him back.

The full realization of his loneliness swept over him after he had wrenched his mind away from all thought of accept-

ing that invitation for next week. And then his senses rose up again and clamored for their gratification once more. That, Heaven knew, was hard enough to bear. But something else, deeper and more irresistible, which lay behind those senses, called out to him, too, in some way justifying them and demanding the cessation of this thwarted life. It was as if his entire manhood, the whole throbbing, held under life of three and twenty—the soul of him that lived within, in flesh as well as mind and spirit—demanded, as its right, some avenue of unrestrained and pacifying expression for that beating, buried life. It came over him fiercely to wonder how the thing could be done if, in this long struggle to be and find himself, he must be shut off from those very relationships of human life which are at once the reward and the strengtheners of self-control.

Here was proof that the grip of the earlier struggle was gone. One chapter of his long endurance was ended, at least for the moment, and a harder and more deadly one begun. For it was not drink that Richard Blaisdell wanted as he strode down Mount Auburn Street in the gathering dusk of that winter's evening. The boy lifted hot eyes and trembling mouth and stared about him. His glances traveled, with a sort of furtive eagerness, up and down the street, as though they searched for that which they dreaded they might find. Was this all that all the strife of these two months had brought him? Was this the victory he had prayed and sweated for, a victory which was only the prelude to a fiercer fight? For now that he had re-focussed will and brain and heart until he was a living soul again; now that he had stored up physical and moral energy until he was, once more, a man, that very manhood turned upon him and thrust this, the ancient and eternal strife, into his face!

His thoughts turned toward Felicia with unutterable anguish. If he could but see her, talk to her, hear her voice, sit again in her presence, then he would have peace. He wanted to be near and listen to her, to speak out the deeper fears and hopes and joys which were accumulating within him.

Or, in default of that, if he could only give her something, make, at her feet, some offering consonant with the depth and meaning of this conflict. Then those fires would go out of themselves for lack of fuel and he would find satisfaction in the way he craved. But what could he do, now, for her, or her's? Nothing, absolutely nothing. What had he to offer except his self?

Suddenly he straightened up and squared his shoulders. With the thought, "All I can give her now is to be what I have set out to be," the Presence had returned. Here, even though in the terms of fresh self-discipline, was the opportunity he craved for the release of that inner life by offering it, unspent and unprofaned, to her.

When he got back to the study Phil was at his desk absorbed in some sort of composition.

"Atwood's been up here again to-night," he remarked coldly. "He said there was going to be a small game in his room about half past eight."

"Well, he can count me out," said Dick steadily. "I hope you told him so."

"I didn't tell him anything. How was I to know what you were going to do!" He conveyed quite clearly that Dick's acquaintances were very much in evidence and a nuisance generally.

"Never mind," said Dick patiently, "they've been playing half an hour by now and forgotten all about it anyway. I'm going to work."

He settled down to his desk and a sort of conscious silence fell upon the room. Presently Phil began folding up his papers as if preparatory to going out. Then Dick reached into a corner of the jumble on his table, and drew out a notebook sheet.

"Say, Phil, here's a—a bit of verse I came across the other day written by someone named 'C. Wentworth.' I found it in a magazine. I wish you'd tell me what you think of it."

"Magazine verse isn't much usually."

"No; but listen!"
He read in his deep voice:

"Long ago I locked my youth
In a dungeon deep and strong;
I must hold him captive there
His whole life long.

"I must keep him tightly chained
And never set him free;
But, oh, with what a terrible cry
My youth cries out to me!"

"Rather crude, don't you think?" said Phil indifferently. "Verse ought to be suggestive, have something vague and intangible, and—oh—something elusive about it."

"Don't you think it's sincere?" said Dick wistfully. "Doesn't it sort of get you?"

"My dear fellow, sincerity's the small part of the craftsmanship of poetry, and as for the verse I'd disagree with it absolutely, anyway. Repression's the most stupid and futile thing in life."

"You don't really mean that, Phil?"

"Of course I do; you're here to express yourself."

"Well," said Dick aggressively, "discipline isn't stupid, and I'll be darned if I can see how sometimes you can get the one without the other. Of course, you have to make a choice of what you express, don't you? You can't do it all! Some things rule out others!"

"I didn't imagine we'd agree on it," said Phil. He got up, gathering his papers.

"You off to the library again?' said Dick very quietly.

"I'm going out to go over some of my stuff here with another fellow."

In spite of himself he flushed as he said it. It made him angry to do that, and he walked out stiffly. It seemed necessary to close the door with great quietness behind him.

Dick put his mind back upon his lessons and sat there quite motionless, reading and taking notes, for perhaps an hour and a half. Finding himself very weary, the mind no longer answering the reiterated demands upon it, he got up and prepared for bed. The breaking of those inner tensions had removed some outer barrier, too. He still felt that there was Someone near.

So he dropped off to sleep and that night there were no shattering dreams.

IX

So, again, Dr. Barrett was sitting with Felicia before the fire and trying for that hardest of all things to get when mind and heart alike are tense and wary—some fusing level of insight and feeling, in which sincere and intimate conversation might be possible. He saw, at once, that, for the moment, the gods were not propitious; the girl was in her teasing and provocative vein. Yet he sensed, behind it, some deeper restlessness, as though she were at odds with all the life about her, perhaps, even, at odds with herself. In such a humor moods would be unpredictable.

As if, he thought, it were not hard enough, at the best, to hold himself to faith in this pressing for a decision! He knew that some of the facts, on which her answer might turn, were still indeterminate; that, under such circumstances, the human spirit ought to learn to wait. How often had he declaimed against the folly of haste in trying to give repose to the feelings! And yet, one might wait too long——

Suddenly she spoke.

"I saw Dick Blaisdell yesterday afternoon."

His heart leaped and sank into a new depression.

"You saw Blaisdell? He's been here!"

"No; I was in Cambridge. I saw him crossing the Square."

"I think you might have let me know that you were over!"

"I didn't let anyone know. I didn't want to. Aunt Hannah and Uncle Trowbridge had to receive at the Brooks House tea for the graduate students and their wives. She asked me to pour."

"But didn't some one bring you home?"

"Jack's away and no one seemed to know just where Fran-

cis was. I didn't stay to dinner, but came back directly afterward. And I will not be 'escorted' everywhere!"

"Still, you know very well that, if I'd dreamed you were at Brooks House, I should have been there, too."

"That's why I wrote Aunt Hannah not to tell you. I wanted to be alone. I feel as if I'd like to get away from everything and everyone I'm used to and look at it all from the outside, see what it's really like. As for the tea, you didn't miss much. The men were rather awful! But I was sorry for the women."

"Oh, I understand! I know that graduate students are a bore to you."

"They certainly looked as if they needed to come up to the surface, occasionally, for air! And their wives! Like dumb sheep moving uncomfortably about in worlds not realized! Those poor creatures, in their pitiful 'best clothes,' pinching and starving, burying themselves in Cambridge—for what? To help their men outgrow them!"

"You know it's not as bad as that."

"Yes, it is. And then the men will blame them for not keeping pace. As if they could! And by and by they'll permit it to be understood that they married young and now it's something of a handicap. They'll be patient and scrupulously polite to their wives in public, be kind where they used to love! Oh, I hate men; I hate them!"

"Oh, come!" said Percy lightly. "Are they any more exacting than women? If a man's profession has to come first and his wife has to adapt herself to it, his love for a woman, and the way she'll use it, may ruin his profession. There's more than one side to that tragedy!"

"Some men don't separate their home and their life work!"

"That's rare; and then it's simple men, uncomplicated and unself-conscious ones."

"You merely mean by that men to whom the first thing isn't personal ambition. Well, I thank Heaven there are some of them!"

"That's only because you are a rather 'complicated' person yourself, Miss Morland. So you ought to understand what men are up against. Most women put all their eggs in one basket. Their feeling and imagination run down one channel. Men can't do it; they aren't built that way. There's a diffused emotion, possibly a richer emotional life, in them which means many centers of interest, other ways besides those of home and love for self-expression."

"You talk," she remarked acidly, "as if you were still living in the last century! One is awed by your complacency over it!"

"I'm not complacent, but I am facing the facts, not railing at them. And one is that human nature doesn't change with the calendar! Men are still, for the most part, the breadwinners. They must be outsiders much of the time."

"You'll grant it's very hard on women."

"No; I don't think I will. The romantic ideal of marriage makes the personal relationship everything. Actually that isn't possible, and, while you think you want it, I don't believe it."

"You don't believe, Mr. Theorizer, that a woman wants to come first, with her husband!"

"Yes, and no. In the end you, certainly, wouldn't be satisfied with that sort of man. You'd want him to have his own pursuits and interests, only you'd want them used for the home just as the home is used for them. A real woman dislikes a doting man just as much as a real man dislikes an ambitious woman."

"Ambitious woman! Oh, Percy Barrett, there speaks the original and only male! What do you know about the new woman!"

"I know she's only a development of, not a substitute for, the old one. And the same is true of the 'new man.' Why not see the whole of it? There's a sense in which men, none more than the 'ambitious' ones, depend upon women until it's almost ludicrous. Once we fall under the spell we're

as bewildered and unhappy as children, when it vanishes. Oh, it evens up, I can assure you!"

"You seem to have detailed understanding of the matter, Percy. I didn't realize you'd had so much experience!"

"I dare say one woman can furnish a sufficiency!"

She laughed in spite of herself, but she was getting tired of it.

"Eternal analysis, sense, prudence, the rampant question mark! It seems as if we'd all lost our simplicity. That's why I want to get away from everything! I think," she added with deliberate malice, "that seeing Dick Blaisdell strengthened me in it!"

Again that sinking heart, and again the rallying of mind and will. Once more he would have it out about Dick and be done with it!

"Why? How did he seem?"

"I only saw him for a moment and he didn't see me at all. I was puzzled by him."

"Puzzled?"

"Yes; he's changed so in appearance."

"I've given him your invitation and told him to come over. Why doesn't he?"

"He sent you a message: 'Tell her that I want to come, and that when I can bring her something I am coming.' He's a strange boy to me, extreme in his way of doing things. I'm frank to say I can't altogether make him out."

She regarded him patiently, half quizzically.

"Indeed, I don't find it difficult. It's everything or nothing with him, isn't it? Not 'diffused' like most men."

"Maybe?"

"Of course. He's not putting success, even character, first. It's a woman. He won't come over as a help to getting on; he's going to get on so as to have the right to come. It's what I said: he wouldn't include a woman in his scheme; he would build it around her!"

"I hope not," said Percy steadily. "I still think that, in

the long run, that spells disaster, and the woman would be the first of the two to realize it."

She tapped her foot impatiently on the floor.

"And yet he's like all the rest of you! You want women to stand on the side-lines and wave handkerchiefs and clap hands, and then, when you've done it all alone—as you imagine! you come to be rested and fêted. Oh, it's the old song: 'For men must work, and women must weep!' Well, we won't; there ought to be comradeship or nothing."

He seized swiftly on that.

"But you're not letting me be a comrade. There's nothing I want more than to talk over my plans—yes, my life, with you to-night. Just as with another friendly and understanding human being," he added hastily, catching the withdrawal of heart and eye, "and you don't let me. I challenge you! Come down from the bleachers. I want just the thing you're saying we don't want; I want to talk openly with a trusted and valued friend."

"All right," she said briefly, but he noted the half reluctant note, the watchfulness in her eyes. "What's it about?"

"I got a letter from Van Buren about ten days ago, offering me an assistant professorship in Romance Languages for next year." His eyes were on her's. "What would you say to it?"

"I should say, from your point of view, that it's perfectly splendid. It's professional advancement. I'm awfully glad for you!"

"You think it's the man 'outside the home' who's considering it? That it makes no difference to him if he goes away from where he's lived all his life and where his friends are!"

"Well, be really honest, now!" Does it?"

"You know it does! Have you forgotten that other conversation we had? Will you let me tell you, what I've never told any other human being, what the scholar's life, which when I marry, I shall offer to the home, means to me? Miss

Morland, you've never seen it, from the inside; you don't know what it is! I've done a lot of thinking since our last talk. That helped me to see it truly again and to understand my own attitude toward it. Mayn't I tell you?"

"Of course," a little wearily. "I suppose you're going to say it means *veritas,* living for the truth."

"Not at all. I'm going to tell you about it in the concrete terms of my own life."

She leaned forward a little at that.

"Yes?"

"We're all of us ruled by something, aren't we? Just now you don't know what it is that's ruling you because it isn't any one thing. You feel something like a rudderless ship, don't you?"

"I don't know whether I do or not. Perhaps so."

"Well, I think I do know what's ruling me, though I'm desperately blue and anxious. It's not clamoring instinct nor passionate desire I'm trying to serve. It's reason and justice and clear-eyed facing of facts, all the facts, and nothing but the facts, and insisting that they shall determine my relationships, my feeling, my conduct."

"You think facts are everything in life? And you tell that to a woman!" She laughed derisively.

"No; I don't. But a man's got to win sovereignty over his spirit, and no man can do that unless he'll face facts first."

"Do you imagine women don't do that? As much as you men will let us! And, then, when you've kept the facts away from us, you tell us we're naturally sentimental!"

"Some women do it," he corrected. "You are one of them. But here's where you don't understand me. You imagine that we who think don't feel, too. Don't feel! I've had some burning and unwonted emotions of late! But here's my creed, and I'm willing to go under for it if I must: I am resolved that neither fear, nor sorrow, nor hate, nor even love, shall wrest the steering of my life from the guidance of my mind. When I feel jealousy—and I have lately—I

call it what it is, and pull my mind away from it, and set my will against it. You'll grant that's a man-sized job?"

"Of course! I didn't know scholars ever felt jealousy."

"You didn't? You'd better sit in at a faculty meeting." Though I wasn't talking of that kind. But now can't you understand that there's something more than the question of personal advancement in going West? Will it help or hinder other things, like the craving for friendship, love? Can't you imagine my mind working on that, too?"

"Yes, I can, Percy."

"And now I'm going to tell you something else. I've tried to lend a hand with Dick Blaisdell ever since that night nearly three months ago, haven't I?"

"Why, of course."

"Well, I'm going to tell you what it's cost me and how unfair, in a sense, you were to ask it. It was impulse on your part, coupled with a little desire to punish me because I showed my dislike at seeing him here." He was watching her, carefully. "Well, every untutored feeling or impulse of mine would have made me reject or evade it, but I said, 'No, I'm going to be just.' That's so dull and easy, you know!"

"Are you really as honest in facing your own motives as you are, shall I say candid, in telling me mine!"

She spoke lightly. He didn't like that. Then there was something more than "impulse" behind that interest in Dick. She had taken the thrust easily because it had not gone home. He went on warily:

"You know what pride is in any real man's life; it's his defensive armor. And where is the place that my sort of a man is most sensitive, where he can least brook failure? It's in trying to win the woman he wants—especially if he's only seven and twenty."

"Oh," she thought, "he says he isn't proposing, but he will in a few minutes." The tide of romantic feeling began to rise in spite of her. It was really happening! She would have to decide! Of course, if she said "no" it would not be the last time men would press for that sweet decision. He

might not ask openly for it to-night; but this was it! He was terribly in earnest. A mingling of the protective and the yielding, of love and compassion, rose within her, as if maid and mother were striving for a common expression. It was enthralling, this sense of his wanting her, fighting for her, pleading for her. Was it that which she loved rather than him? How easy to be carried now—who should say where?—by the very sweetness of it. Under guise of tenderness to yield, under guise of yielding merely to be wholly tender. At least for a moment he had stirred her deepest feeling. He had all her attention, now.

She made a movement as if of flight.

"Percy, I can't bear that to-night!"

"I shall not ask it of you—to-night. I promise you that."

How suddenly relief and disappointment swept over her. She could have turned on him, then. But he gave her no chance.

"But I am going to make you see what you say you want to, the real way a man feels inside. Do you suppose Dick Blaisdell is the only fellow who's been fighting? I've been fighting, too!"

She was very much interested, again.

"I didn't realize," she said, contritely, "truly I didn't realize just what I was doing."

"It's only that little word, 'just' that saves you, because you did know more or less. But I'm through with it!"

"If you please, we won't discuss Dick any further," she said irritably. And then: "Oh, I'm tired of it! I'm tired of it all! If you'll just remember that even a girl doesn't want too many blows at once, I'd like to hear"—a faint whimsicality returning, "to hear more of what this broken-loose volcano that you call a 'scholar' is. It may be my last opportunity—or desire."

"I'm ready to chance it. I want——

His voice faltered and broke; the thin hand clenched hard; the breath came quickly like that of one much spent with running. It troubled her to see it.

"I want to tell you what I am—what I try to be inside. There's more than one way that men strive toward the quality of greatness. Some fellows are born to it by sheer nobleness and gentleness of heart. They seem to be informed by the living spirit of affection; they have high intuitions; men love and follow them; they interpret and serve their time through their correct and elevated feeling of the issues of life. I am not that kind. I know it; I'm not that kind."

His head sank for a moment, but he brought it up.

"And there are others not so fine and gifted who just fight their way with the dogged perseverance of the naturally decent-minded boy out of commonplace and vulgar living, the indiscriminate practice of the crowd, into a sturdy, self-respect. I've seen them. They just accumulate moral decisions and by and by that gives them something of authority and dignity even if they are ordinary human lives."

"Then you can't call them 'ordinary'!" she said jealously.

He was very white.

"Perhaps not. Yet it's not always wise to forget their limitations in their excellencies. But now I'm going to describe to you my kind. I'm proud of them; I'm fighting for them, as well as for myself, to-night. If any woman loves me she will have to like the kind of people with whom I live and whom I honor. I was brought up as you and your brother were. Brought up to the sort of life the ordinary clubman leads. To play golf well, and growl at diminished dividends, and bewail the present state of politics and damn Labor! But scholarship, and these chaps you make fun of, have been strong enough to pull me out of it! We," he said bitterly, "we are those awkward, tongue-tied fellows you saw yesterday afternoon, 'grinds,' and graduate students. My kind are all the remote and quiet striplings, withdrawn and diffident, behind their books. They don't compete on diamond, field, or track. But theirs is the valor of the mind. They'll have no guessed solutions; they want nothing of the half-truth. No adroit and compromising ways, no prudence or sentiment or mere tradition can swerve them from their

quest of what is so. And it is they who give most to the glory of the University. It is the prestige of learning which they contribute which makes athletic victories significant. Why does a Harvard triumph on the gridiron mean so much? Because it is a football victory in a college that stands for something so much bigger than football!"

"Oh, Percy, I know it! I'm sorry I ever pretended not to!"

"That's not the precise truth. You didn't pretend; you knew it, but you didn't believe it. But I'm going to make you believe it now."

"I do! I do!" she said a little wildly. "Please, please let me be now!"

"Not yet! I've not yet made you see what's really deepest." Then the passionateness of that self-defence lifted him, for the moment, into the language of imagination. "No! and perhaps I can't! The sort I am don't sing the golden songs nor see the shining visions. We have no supple tongues to recite the music of the ancient tales. But our eyes, too, are fixed upon a star. We toil to learn the moderate speech, the fair and accurate account, to drink deep at the full cup of the distilled learning of the world. And why? So that we may look out upon life with purged, considerate minds and light it—not exhort, or patronize, or accept, or exploit, but light it! Doesn't that mean that we have something to bring into a home? Isn't the love of that sort of a man worth having?"

He got up.

"I've only one thing to ask. Don't decide now—wait! See it all again in the light of what I've just been saying. Give me a chance! Wait!"

Her head was buried in her hands. She was softly crying, crying openly, quietly, like a helpless child. Yet it was not protective tenderness that stirred within him, as he stood over her. Rather the deep impulse to seize her, crush her, in spite of protests, in spite of promises, against his breast. Something said, "Act! Act, and you can have her now.

Act, and you can make her say 'yes'!" But his mind said, "Wait! Besides, you can't take advantage of her, in this way. You've done much this evening. Don't spoil it by pushing it too far." So he stood, no longer lean and dapper, but a slight figure of some real dignity and distinction—stood, debating! looking down at the weeping girl——

She rose to her feet, tears unconcealed, unheeded, still rolling down her cheeks. She gave him both her hands in perfect trust and confidence.

"Percy, I shall never, never forget this night. You are not asking me for an answer now. I'm not giving any. I never knew what you were before; but I do know now. I shan't ever forget it!"

Her spirit enfolded, protected, cherished him, as though its sorrow brooded over him. She was inexpressibly gentle.

He got back to his rooms at last, spent and depressed. Why was he so resentful and broken over the utter kindness of those final moments? Next week she and her mother were coming over for his tea. Would there be any change in her attitude? He dreaded that first meeting.

XII

THURSDAY morning dawned cold and clear, and, not without something of mixed anticipations, Percy made ready for his guests. The Vesper Service, occurring each week of the term between Christmas and Easter, was, as Monty joyously expressed it, the "Harvard Matinée." There was a short lesson, much music by the choir, a brief, if distinguished address, and then the gay crowd swept out, either to ascend the gallery in Memorial Hall to watch the undergraduates at their evening meal or to disperse to various rooms on Mt. Auburn Street, or in the Yard, where tea and muffins and cake had been prepared. Mrs. Morland had no great enthusiasm for the function. Her sensitive and exacting pride in the University disliked the incongruous sequel to the service as derogatory to its dignity. Indeed, college teas, in general, seemed to her extraordinarily informal and not too decorous affairs.

But to Phil the invitation of the afternoon was a great event. To begin with, it represented his first purely social contact with any of his instructors. Not only was his French teacher to be his host, but Professor John Trowbridge, Mrs. Morland's brother, was also to be present. No one about the Yard or Square knew much about Mr. Trowbridge; he lived near the Observatory, absorbed in his telescopes and stars, and was seldom, if ever, seen in undergraduate haunts. But he was known to be a distinguished scientist, and he figured in the college tradition as an incredibly learned being whose remotely distant standards of studious life the young mind regarded with a mixture of tolerant amusement and uncomprehending awe.

But, aside from this, the afternoon's adventure was to

afford the opportunity of meeting the sister of that senior whose fascinating person and flattering companionship had transformed his recent days. Life had not been going quite to his liking, lately, and he welcomed the distraction and adventure of this new acquaintance. Phil, moreover, felt himself quite a man of the world by now, and rather anticipated the occasion as offering an adequate opportunity for the easy and modest display of his new sophistication. How tired Miss Morland must be of the ordinary freshman chatter! By contrast he saw himself, through witty phrase and intelligent glance, quietly interesting and intriguing the young lady. It was quite intoxicating to feel that now, as he should meet this popular and brilliant girl, he could modestly but firmly claim entrance to the inner circle, the freemasonry of the youthful illuminati. An afternoon whose glamour of distinguished names and enviable introductions would be justified by high conversation; an hour of "good talk" which, incidentally, admitted one to the company of the socially elect—why, this was life indeed!

But at the same time, without confessing it, he was extremely nervous; worse yet, felt horribly and awfully young. He knew nothing about girls except from his school days' prosaic companionships, and of course he had heard much of Felicia. No one could be in Morland's rooms, where many men were coming and going, and escape that. The gay messages, the formal inquiries, the audacious or diffident petitions transmitted through her brother, had given him a quite definite notion of her personality. Of course, at heart she was a serious and thoughtful person. Phil did not know it, but it was impossible for him to conceive of anyone as being at once charming and able without postulating that! She would be tall and very graceful like her brother, a girl with much presence, gracious and appreciative beneath any surface badinage. He conceived endless situations in which, as she said thus and thus, he deftly answered so and so. They would be at once bright and merry, dazzling and sincere, together. Several introductory phrases touching on his

delight and anticipation in meeting her, and on his discriminating understanding of her subtly suggested insights, her just indicated brilliance, occurred to him. These he would bear in mind when he went forward to greet her!

But, when the day dawned, they all seemed flat or else he could not recall them with any confident clearness. By noon he felt a little like a schoolboy who wanted to run away and hide somewhere. He was still restlessly excited at the prospect of meeting her, but, as the hour of the service drew near, all his native shyness had overtaken him. Then it was that it occurred to his astute freshman heart that he might go early to Chapel, and, by watching the arrivals, gain a glimpse of the young lady before the dread, if delightful, moment when he should be presented. So, entering by the students' door, he took a side seat along the wall where he could overlook the entire assembly.

The auditorium, filling rapidly, was warm and close. Rings of light and heat flared from the unshaded gas jets clustered about the iron pillars. The air was heavy with its mixture of many faint odors and perfumes. It was rather a nondescript crowd which poured through the open doors, bound together by the common ties of joyous youth, and representing, as Harvard had come to represent, all sorts and conditions of men in the great Democracy.

But suddenly Phil's eyes fastened on an entering group who were most distinctly different from the others and set apart. Francis, Percy just behind him, was coming down the aisle with his mother. Phil saw a short, slender woman, graying hair under the close widow's bonnet, the simplest and severest of black attire. But what his spirit fastened on was the dignity of that erect, gracious figure. Mrs. Morland entered the Chapel as one coming into a place long known and loved. Her very appearance in it seemed typical; she made the mean and narrow nave to appear spacious, symbolical of the spiritual valor and heroism of the University. Her slender, black-robed figure moving easily, with unconscious authority, amid the gay inconsequent throng, seemed to link

it up with the deeper meanings, the great strengths and traditions of Harvard's past. To Phil's excited imagination there was something regal in her bearing. He thought he had never seen such unspoken reserves of patience and control. "His mother," he thought, "how proud he must be of her!" It reminded him of his own mother, and that made him more self-conscious and vaguely uncomfortable and irritated, though he could not have said why. But where was Francis' sister? Then he saw, a little way behind these three, Jack Trowbridge, and, walking lightly beside him, a delicately slender girl. She was looking up at her towering escort archly as Phil's eyes first fell on her, and he caught the gleam of mischief and merriment under the shining lashes. One little hand just rested on Trowbridge's arm, the other was hidden in her muff; and she moved down the aisle as lightly as thistle-down drifts across a pasture under the August sun. A sudden wave, first of heat, then cold, swept over the boy. "Oh, I say!" he thought. "What a wonderful girl! I guess she could do most anything with a man!"

He became entirely oblivious to the service, his eyes fastened on Felicia, and his first impressions deepened and intensified as it went on. He noticed the grace and lightness of her motion, the soft curve of her throat and neck, as, furs thrown back, she sat half turned toward him. How easily her color came and went! What a vital, delicate, high-bred being she was! The freshman's heart was set on fire. Panic and delight, joy and terror, had their way with him as he escaped the throng at the conclusion of the service and made his way to Percy's fire-lighted, candle-flickering rooms. Leaving his hat and coat in the lobby, he hurriedly pulled his cuffs from beneath his coat sleeves, rubbed his damp palms in a frenzy because they would not dry, looked sidewise in the mirror at his smooth mop of hair, screwed his courage to the sticking point, and entered the study.

Professor Trowbridge was standing by the window. He looked like an old-fashioned gentleman of Thackeray's school; a quiet, friendly figure with gray side whiskers and

a mild, sagacious eye. He was gazing about him with benevolent abstraction, hands clasped before him. Apparently there was nothing very formidable there.

Felicia was seated at the tea table, the masses of her soft brown hair gleaming in the candle light. Percy was bending over her, acting as chief helper; Jack Trowbridge, laughing and looking down at her from the other side. Her hands were weaving in and out among the tea things as Phil entered, and her eyes, dancing with merriment and a sort of mocking raillery, were glancing from one to the other of the two men. But the lad's attention was temporarily riveted by another and nearer group, consisting of Mrs. Morland, sitting straightly in Percy's desk chair, and gazing calmly, impartially at Monty, who was deposited on a little stool at her feet. His face was turned ingenuously, ingratiatingly, toward the lady as Phil entered, much as the cherubs gaze upward in contemplative complacency from the frame of the Sistine Madonna.

"Mrs. Morland," he was saying, "don't you think that was a fine talk? So—er—sort of soothing and comfortable? I liked the old boy's language," he plunged on recklessly; "he's so slick the way he says it. In my English A vocabulary, it's his 'diction' that gets me! Sorts of elevates and subdues you all at once!"

Phil felt an insane and almost irresistible desire to laugh. How awful if he should suddenly break out into silly and inexplicable cachinnations, to the alarm and amazement of them all! But Mrs. Morland continued to gaze serenely at the ingenuous Monty much as one might regard a sportive but innocent child.

"Really, Mr. Ward," she said, "I'm not quite sure to whom you refer. In my youth when young men spoke of the 'old boy' they usually were referring to the——"

"Oh, good heavens, ma'am," cried Monty aghast. "I didn't mean that!"

An hysterical chuckle rose in Phil's throat, but just then Percy saw him and saved the situation.

"Mrs. Morland," he said, "may I introduce Mr. Spenser, of the freshman class? And, Miss Morland, this is Mr. Spenser."

The elder woman greeted him with impersonal graciousness, Felicia gave him a firm clasp of a small, warm hand, smiled dazzlingly at him, and then appeared to forget all about him. He found himself with a half-formed sentence hanging in mid-consciousness.

"Who was it," she said, turning to Trowbridge, "that sang that stunning baritone solo? Usually when one of you men warbles alone in Appleton it's like a very uncertain voice crying in the wilderness. But this was fine; it seemed as if a real live person was doing it."

Percy laughed shortly; Jack answered:

"Oh, that was young Crimmins. He has a good voice, and a sort of flair for public singing—does it naturally, with authority. He's the fellow, you know, they had the fuss over in the Glee Club."

"In the Glee Club? No, I didn't know! Francis," she called to her brother, "what's this you haven't been telling me about the trouble in the Glee Club?"

Morland sauntered up, suave, affectionately patronizing, deferential.

"Nothing much, sis. It was about the Christmas trip. The fellow sings well enough, but naturally the men weren't anxious to take him on the road with them. The coach got sore and kicked when he found it out, and there was something of a row."

"Why didn't the fellows want to take him?" said Felicia calmly. "What's the matter with him?"

"Oh, there's nothing particular the matter with his mind or his morals, so far as I know, if that's what you mean," said Francis. "But the men are entertained everywhere on that trip, and, obviously, he isn't our sort."

Mrs. Morland's quiet, decisive voice broke into the conversation and, instinctively, everyone stopped to listen.

"It is quite apparent what your brother intends, Felicia.

This—Mr. Crimmins, did you call him?—is doubtless a man of character." She turned toward her son. "But you mean that he is not socially congenial?"

"Of course!" said Francis, shortly.

He was exasperated with his sister. Always asking questions! Whenever she appeared the gay and careless surface of things suffered.

"To be sure, a gentleman judges every man on his merits," continued Mrs. Morland. "But to respect a man in his own sphere entails no obligation to bring him out of that into yours. Indeed, that would be as unfortunate for him as for you. Still," she went on, flushing faintly, "we whose people made the college, have certain obligations to these others who are now coming to us. We all recognize that."

"Do listen to mother," said Felicia aside to Percy. "Margaret Fuller wasn't a circumstance to her. She can turn even a college tea into a conversazione! And she hasn't the slightest idea of how inconsistent she is. She likes so many things in theory until she sees them in practice!"

"Of course, our sort of people live up to the code," said Francis impatiently. "It isn't a question of social largesse, anyway. I suppose it's one of democracy. A goal which many confess and few cherish," he added, half maliciously.

"What would be your attitude toward Mr. Crimmins, mother dear?" said Felicia.

"I would offer everything the college has to give to men that have the character and brains to take it," said Mrs. Morland readily.

"Even to conceding equality of social standing?" said the girl, lightly.

Mrs. Morland turned cold eyes on her daughter.

"That is a totally different matter. It would not be in our power to grant that even if we were disposed to. One who expected it would be a parvenu and unworthy of it. But no self-respecting young man need fear that he will suffer at our hands!" she concluded, proudly.

"You never can tell, mother! You don't really like democ-

racy any better than Francis does, only you don't say so quite so openly. You would extend to these new men, as a gift, what you would withhold from them as a right. And so a real man wouldn't take it!"

Mrs. Morland turned to the other side of the room.

"Tell me how your dear mother is, Mr. Ward," she said to Monty.

"Well, I think Felicia's right," broke in Jack boldly. "If the college is to be all that it ought to be we've got to have a real democracy here. I say eliminate the cads and the snobs, the rotters and the rah-rah boys, before they come. Just publish frankly that we want the best of all sorts, and we'll give 'em a fair chance when they get here, but we're going to choose the toppers. We can't keep some men going because of their grandfathers or their money, and shove others about because of their names or their accents. I say judge your men on a man's basis, and then, when they make good, anything Harvard is or has is theirs. That's what I'd call the new spirit!"

"It all sounds nicely, Jack," said Francis, "but you see the rest of us aren't coerced by circumstances. We haven't got to practice it willy-nilly in order to pick a winning eleven!"

Jack's bold eyes regarded Morland imperturbably. It struck Percy that his cousin's fling had left him quite untouched. He went on:

"It ought to give you a jolt, though, to realize what some of the reasons are why we don't like these newcomers. One is that we're afraid of losing our own standing. These outsiders who come with unpronounceable names from the ends of the earth have got the sand and they've got the gray matter. They aren't afraid to work, and they can think like a race horse. I notice that they carry off an awful lot of prizes now. If they had our running start as well, we fellows, whose acquaintances are limited principally to Beacon Street and the Deity, wouldn't have even a look-in!"

The young men laughed uncomfortably, Professor Trow-

bridge gazed benevolently before him, Mrs. Morland sat rigid, but Monty calmly broke the ensuing pause.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you're all talking about," said he, "but the spirit moves me at this moment to remark that I'm getting to be an awful snob myself. Down at school one fellow seemed to me pretty much as good as another, but the sentiments I entertain toward some of my dear young classmates up here would hardly be mentionable in polite society!"

Then Phil took his chance; he was sure he had something to say.

"I'm only a first year man, of course, too," he said, with careful ease, "but really I should agree with Francis. I don't know that I'm undemocratic as regards mixing with the fellows. As a matter of fact, I've never tried, because an indiscriminate acquaintance wouldn't interest me. But it's something in the attitude that one naturally takes toward men of brains. I suppose Monty means it wouldn't be hard to make him into a sort of social snob. Well, I can't see that there's anything indefensible in becoming an intellectual aristocrat. I don't think the college is here to adapt itself to everyday life; it isn't worth it. It has a right to be selective and critical, and then it's able to give the best to those who can, and will, take it."

Felicia gazed steadfastly and impersonally at him, then she turned to Professor Trowbridge.

"Uncle John," she cried, "you'll agree with me, won't you, that 'no one in college knows everything, not even the youngest of us!' But isn't it true that complacency of person and intellect have no right here? Oughtn't education to level barriers, not raise them?" She turned and smiled sweetly at Phil. "Make men quick to understand, Mr. Spenser, not slow to help?"

"Oh, yes!" said Phil confusedly. "Of course! Why, yes!" He was not quite sure in his mind that he was going to like her, after all.

But Professor Trowbridge was answering his niece's in-

quiry. He spoke slowly; he had a way of saying startling things with a voice of preternatural mildness.

"These young gentlemen of the freshmen class have perhaps spoken more wisely than they knew. One of them finds it increasingly easy to make a barrier of his mind between himself and uncultivated men; the other finds a diminishing inclination to be democratic in social intercourse with his mates. I am inclined to believe that the two things hang together, and that the one is somewhat responsible for the other. I see no essential difference between an intellectual aristocracy on the one hand, and social exclusiveness on the other, except that the pretentiousness of the attitude is less obvious in the first case than in the second."

"Now," said Felicia, "I think we're going to get somewhere! I can always tell when you begin that way, Uncle John, that as soon as you become intelligible it's going to be interesting. Please go on and tell us what you mean by it!"

"It's quite uncommon nowadays, although not wholly displeasing," said Professor Trowbridge, regarding his niece with a look of semi-humorous affection, "to find youth so persistently underrating itself. A college," he continued, with that even, dangerous gentleness, "exists to teach men how to think, to help them, through reflection, to understand what they do and to define what they know. The educated man reduces action to its principles where it can be observed and estimated——"

"That may be your notion of a college, sir," broke in Francis, "but it certainly isn't what most undergraduates were sent here for—nor what they want when they come, either!"

"He means that it's the real idea," said Percy quickly, "that underlies and carries all the other superficial ones. If there wasn't genuine passion for learning and truth and justice here, the community would soon dispose of the country-club, winter-watering-place end of it."

"Quite so!" said Professor Trowbridge. "We are accepted

and supported because our fellow citizens believe that true scholarship is both practical in aim and democratic in spirit. It never exists as an end in itself; still less, to serve as a badge of intellectual superiority. To be sure, the scholar is an interpreter and a critic of the community—not a critic, however, in the carping or supercilious sense, but in the older meaning of the word; namely, 'one that nobly judges.' He is, then, a constructive influence in the common life; always a humanist, but a humanist that serves with his mind rather than by action."

"You surely don't mean by all that," broke in Francis impatiently, "that the college should presume to exercise control over our social customs outside the class room? We don't come here to go to Sunday School!"

"No direct control, certainly," said his uncle calmly, "the emphasis here is not moral, but intellectual. Your teachers are set to discover principle rather than to apply it to conduct. But while we do not teach practical morality, I should consider it poor instruction where morals were not affected. I find it always the danger of the student that he comes to love the truth as an abstract proposition and to ignore its applications to the life of the world or to his self. Hence, men may endlessly debate the problems of humanity all the while living in cloistered and indulgent ease. Hence, the learned despise the ignorant. Yet learning should issue in wide and generous social intercourse, and scholarship in comprehending comradeship with ignorance. Our task is to show our young friends here, who forget their essential likeness to their mates in remembering the accidental differences, that they are thinking badly."

"I always suspected that I didn't know enough to go in when it rains," observed Monty to Phil, "but it's so nice to have some kind old gentleman confirm it! He's quite frank, isn't he!"

"But," broke in Percy restlessly, "we give men equality of opportunity here. There's no color or race line; what more can we do? Nobody can give equality of standing."

"No," went on the even voice, "but we can see to it that the inevitable inequality is a natural and just one, not artificial and unjust. We are bound to give to each man that place which his talents, when they are thus revealed in this free expression of personality, show him to be entitled to. But if I rate one element of personality, intellectual power, above manhood, which is the sum of all the elements, I create by false thinking an artificial inequality. If our young friend here rates money, antecedents, social equipment, above virtue and ability, then by a similar process of false thinking he does the same."

"Good for you, Dad," said Jack. "That's the stuff! For my part I like a man better when his native grain hasn't been all obscured by oil and polish. You know what he is then!"

"But, John," broke in Mrs. Morland anxiously, "we have an inherited culture, here. Our first duty is to preserve that, no less to offer it to these new people than to our own children!"

"We cannot preserve it, Emily," said the old man gently, "nor do we need to try. Whatever in it is worth preserving will take care of itself. Our task is to give it freely to whomever desires it and let it live by change."

"Oh, well, Uncle John," said Francis uneasily, "as far as I am concerned, I'm free to confess that democracy makes no appeal to me, and I'm glad I didn't have to practice it in college. It's no vice, if you're born to a good thing to hold onto it."

"Cruelty," said the old man, "is the most despicable of human vices."

"And ungenerosity comes next!" cried Felicia. "Not letting another person in just because you can keep him out!"

"Yet we need not be greatly concerned," concluded her uncle. "The college, like any other living organism, will choose its own wherever it finds it. I have watched it for many years perpetually renewing itself from the bottom, always dying at the top."

"Felicia," said Francis in a low tone, "for heaven's sake,

can't you stop this? You were foolish enough to start it!"

"It's always easy enough, brother dear, to drop from the sublime to the ridiculous when there are six men around!" She turned directly to Phil. "Mr. Spenser," she cried gayly, while her steady shining eyes, with something quite cool in them, took in the minutest detail of the lad's appearance, "please come over here and sit by me. I know you like tea, and you want three lumps in it, and cream besides—you don't care for lemon, do you? No, I knew it; freshmen never do. Dear Mr. Spenser, I do so envy you!"

Poor Phil gasped and then gasped again; his wits had left him.

"Envy me! It's not about the lemon, is it?"

Felicia laughed with faint maliciousness. The boy was in a blue funk of embarrassment, furiously angry, and yet her gayety, the force and confidence behind it, fascinated him. She seemed so positive beside her brother!

"Mercy, no!" she cried finally. "It's nothing whatever to do with the lemon; it's because you're a freshman. Don't you know why everybody is jealous of freshmen?"

"I don't believe I do," he replied stiffly.

"Why, because they're so young, Mr. Spenser; there's nothing behind, and you've got everything ahead. Of course we envy you! But then," she added more quietly, "I was thinking of you, yourself, and I've got another quite particular and especial reason for envying you."

The boy looked at her distrustfully, a little sullen and on guard.

"I can't imagine why any one like you should be envious of me," he said awkwardly, "unless," his eyes brightening, "it's because you've heard how well I know your brother!"

Felicia started a second; her hand wavered among the tea cups.

"Hear this, Mother!" she cried out. "Mr. Spenser thinks himself an enviable person because he's a friend of Francis'!" She smiled gayly at the elder woman. "Don't you tell him

that," she went on, turning back to Phil, "because, like most women and all men, he's terribly vain and it wouldn't do him any good!"

"I think I have it now," said Phil slyly. He was beginning to recover from his embarrassment and felt he could play the man of the world at last. She was just saying airy nothings; he felt rather contemptuous of it; however, she should see that he could do that, too. He assumed a devoted air. "It's because I'm allowed to sit here—shall I say, by the tea things?—while the other fellows have to stand."

She regarded him steadily with a dreadful silence.

"My dear Mr. Spenser," she said finally, "you really musn't embarrass me. I'm not used to such overwhelming compliments. I shall be afraid you'll think I'm like Ellen Terry's friend, who remarked that 'unadulterated flattery was quite good enough for her!'"

"Oh, no! Of course not. I beg pardon!" he said, flushing crimson.

"Not at all!" sweetly. "I quite understand you didn't really mean it. Well, you've had three guesses and you're not even warm; but perhaps you're not clever at seeing things—I've a notion that's true, though Francis says you talk quite well, too."

"Let me try again," desperately. "I wouldn't like you to think I was exactly stupid."

"I'm not so sure but what you are!" tartly. "Well, here's why I think you deserve congratulations—it's because you've got such a nice roommate!"

If the ceiling had suddenly collapsed upon them then and there Phil could not have been more amazed and startled.

"Such a nice roommate!" he repeated after her blankly. "Such a nice roommate! Do you know my roommate?"

The word seemed glued to his tongue; he could not get away from it.

"Why, of course! I've known him ever since his freshman year. He's got the two things without which you can't

make a man: will and courage. I dare say you're making the most of this one year in getting acquainted with him——"

"Making the most of it?" he said blankly.

"Precisely!" She smiled with merry frankness. "And any one who's captured Francis as easily as you have ought to have no trouble with Mr. Blaisdell. Mother," she continued, rising, "I see there's very little cake and absolutely no candy left, so I'm sure everybody's had a beautiful time and I think you and I had better be going back."

Monty regarded her grimly. He had overheard that conversation about the roommate. And he had not forgotten his interview at the dance.

"Oh, you're surely not going yet," he cried. "I want to talk about my little freshman problems, too. You see, we all have 'em! Honest, Miss Morland, would you be awfully surprised to know that I'm 'most as foolish as I look and that I just need your advice? And I'm sure you're always ready to give it!"

"It's very early still," said Percy in a low voice. "I've hardly had a chance for a word with you. Surely you don't need to go yet!"

Felicia gazed steadily at Monty.

"Your problems will keep," she said. "I can tell by your looks that they're only just beginning. It'll be much more economical for you to talk them over with me later. I dare say you haven't begun to get into as unhappy situations yet as you soon will!" She turned brightly and looked out from behind her shining panoply at Percy. "We really must go," she said, "the old Roxbury Shakespeare Society met with us last night, the play was 'Antony,' and I was no less than 'first, second, and third soldier,' and poor Mother was *Cleopatra!* It was a dreadful strain on everybody concerned and we're both tired." She laughed again. "Good night, Mr. Spenser; don't forget to remember me to your roommate!"

XIII

As Francis, for reasons of his own, was seeing his mother and sister home, Percy said good-bye to them at the car and returned, tired and dispirited, to his rooms. He had seen almost nothing of Felicia the entire afternoon; indeed it seemed as if she had erected an invisible barrier between them. She had been frankly affectionate with her cousin, gay and tolerant with Francis, and bright and friendly, but oh, so impersonal with him. It was really the freshmen, and Phil in particular, in whom she had been most interested. And that was what cut, for he knew that her interest in Spenser was not really in him at all, but in his roommate. Indeed, his rasped and jealous spirit had sensed throughout the tea that her underlying thoughts had been for the absent boy. It had hardly been a satisfactory afternoon.

So he was glad it was over. It was not easy for his spirit to adapt itself to gay and general intercourse; he had no faith or interest in it, at bottom. It was a relief now to be free to let down a bit, to get back to the peace and solitude of his disordered rooms. But the first thing he saw when he opened his door was Spenser. Phil was standing at the window, looking out toward the river, evidently waiting for him. "Really," thought Percy, "this acting 'in loco parentis' is getting to be too much of a good thing! Why doesn't the boy go home?" He spoke with curt civility:

"Hello, Spenser. Still here! Anything I can do for you?"

The lad turned away from the window and came forward into the study. Weary and preoccupied as he was, Percy noticed the boy's restless and irritated manner. He was re-

bellious at something, unhappy at the place he found himself in, and at once assertive and defensive.

"Yes," he said. "I want to talk to you about my roommate."

"Good God!" broke from Percy uncontrollably. "Must I be eternally hearing about your roommate!"

The startled boy regarded him with an added and perplexed distrustfulness, his cheeks crimsoning.

"Very well, sir. I beg your pardon. Of course I have no right to trouble you with it. In that case I'll be going——"

"I must take back what I just said," Percy interrupted stiffly. "You are, naturally enough, misunderstanding me. I spoke out of a temporary irritation which has no other significance. In fact, I'm interested to hear that you're thinking about Blaisdell."

"Interested I'm thinking about him! There you are, sir. I simply don't know where I stand! No one ever talked to me about him until yesterday when Francis——"

"Has Morland been speaking of him?"

"Yes, sir. And, then, to-day, his sister! She certainly appears to like him! What's more, she made me feel that because I never have, and still don't, that it put me on the defensive. I don't think I like her very well, anyway!" he concluded hardily.

Everything the boy said added to Percy's exasperation.

"Don't be too ready with snap judgments, Spenser!"

"Another way of hitting at the same thing she did!" The boy faced him unflinchingly, tears of angry pride in his eyes. Percy had never realized the aggressive intensity of that high-strung, inexperienced spirit. "'No one knows everything, not even the youngest of us!' I didn't miss that! I don't think it's fair. If you're trying to take what you think is the freshman conceit out of me, sir, it's pretty successfully accomplished already! And I think I have something of a grievance, myself. I can't make out in what relation any of

you stand toward him. Of course, being a freshman, I ought not to expect to! Just take what he handed out to me the first part of the term and now do as I'm told! Have some special freshman method of understanding it! I don't think it's a square deal."

The boy's unconcealed resentment and frank challenge would have angered Percy if he had not noted how big the lad's eyes looked and how tired. Underneath this flare-up was evidently some deeper tension.

"No," he answered equably, "there is some truth in that; it isn't altogether fair."

"The whole place isn't fair either," burst out the boy. "I'm just about sick of college; it's no better than the world outside. You do your best, but you don't get any credit for it. All the mistakes are checked up and all the good things discounted. Things aren't the way you believed! I thought every one here would—would understand; that all the fellows here would be companionable, sort of; that every one studied hard and thought seriously, and we'd all be working for big ends together. And they laugh at it!"

"You heard the conversation this afternoon, didn't you? Wasn't it clear how your friend Morland sees it? Most men, I expect, are here for economic or social reasons; some to learn how best and easiest to make money; some how to get a better place in the sun or to hold the one they already have. I get weary of it myself. You'll have to do what the rest of us do—put up with it!"

"But I supposed there was so much romance and poetry about college life. Why is it," he cried out, "that all the ideal and wonderful things seem to have happened so long ago? Monty Ward and Morland are about the only men I know here, and now—now I can't understand what's come over Morland."

"Just what was it he suggested to you?" said Percy quietly.

"It was yesterday afternoon. I was over at his room in

Claverly. There was a pause in the conversation; I think he was tired or something. He has days when he's nervous and restless, doesn't seem well, somehow."

"H'm," said Percy. "I hadn't noticed that. Well, go on."

"I was blue and irritable myself and tired, tired of holding on! Nothing seemed to go right—what was the use? I just felt like letting go, somehow. I don't know that you'll understand?"

"Perfectly. You just wanted to go to the devil, and, within certain limits, you weren't particular as to how. Oh, yes, I quite understand."

"Well, I did let go; but I didn't mean to until I'd done it. And, what's worse, I did it in a way I'd never have expected to."

"Which, after all, was just the way you might have expected, wasn't it? What happened?"

"Francis got up out of his chair, quite suddenly, and walked over to the window. He almost never makes a quick, impulsive movement like that. It made me feel he was tired of me. By and by he said, 'How is your roommate and where is he? Why don't you ever speak of him?' "

"Has he ever mentioned Blaisdell to you, before?"

"Only on the night I first met him. I thought then he was a friend of Dick's and that prejudiced me against him and I asked him about it. But I saw, from the way he answered, he hadn't any use for him. That was, partly, why I first liked Morland, because he, too, despised him. It was sort of soothing to me, seemed to justify me."

"Did you ever stop to wonder why you felt any need of justification?"

"I didn't mean 'justify' in that sense! I mean it confirmed me!"

"I see. Did he drop Blaisdell, yesterday, after that one remark?"

"No; I said, 'I don't talk about him because I don't like

him.' Then Francis loked at me quizzically and said, as if he were watching to see how I'd take it and rather enjoying it: 'Well, he's no friend of mine, but since you room together why don't you cultivate him a little?' He knew it would hurt me to have him say that, but he did!"

"It was not uncharacteristic," said Percy briefly.

"It made me bitter and angry and then I said—what I'm ashamed of! Oh, that old man, this afternoon—you heard him? 'Cruelty is the most despicable of human vices!' I couldn't stand his saying it!"

"It was not you he had in mind when he made that observation."

"But it went home just the same. Because yesterday, when Morland told me to cultivate Dick, I was cruel—and worse! I looked up and laughed and said, 'It's not I who ought to be doing that, but you. You could do anything with him, you know. Of course you understand he'd like to be chumming with you again!' 'No, really?' said Morland and there was a funny look in his eyes, something cool and eager all at once. 'What makes you think so?' 'I don't think it, I know it. He's got a book you gave him, with an inscription from you on the fly-leaf. And I could tell it by the way I once saw him take it up and look at it. Oh, he likes you, all right. Amusing, isn't it!'"

"You said all that? Told that to Morland!"

"Yes; and I know it was—was mean and dishonorable. It's like betraying confidences! I can't get away from it, it was dishonorable. I gave Dick away and I did it on purpose. I felt like being mean, hard, cruel! I don't know but what I thought it would rouse Francis somehow, get me—get me nearer to him again. Oh, I don't know what's come over me lately!"

"May I ask what Morland said, then?"

"He was interested, all right. He was watching me quite closely. He smiled that hiding smile of his and then he came back and sat down by the fire, and we talked along

more like the way we used to. I did feel as though I'd got —got more 'inside' with him. But I paid too high for it. I did a dishonorable thing."

"You certainly did," said Percy grimly, "and a cruel one to boot."

"Well, I'm telling you so, aren't I? I know it! I guess I'm willing to pay for it. Do you think I ought to tell Dick and apologize? I would—I would hate to, but, if I ought, I suppose I will."

"No," said Percy quietly. "I don't think I should tell Blaisdell anything about it. I think it's to Morland you ought to apologize."

"To Francis!"

"Yes; I think I should feel mean, if I'd done that sort of thing, until I'd acknowledged, to the person who heard me, how ashamed I was."

"But I'd some justification. I don't like Dick," the boy cried fiercely, "you know I don't! And I do want to stand well with Morland."

"That's beside the point, isn't it? As for Morland, I don't think you'll stand either better or worse with him for retracting it. He'll be quite interested. But, I think, in view of this situation, I'd like to tell you some things about your roommate. They may help you to see what to do in this matter."

"Yes, sir," in rather a non-committal tone. "I'm willing to listen."

"Indeed," said Percy dryly. "I'm afraid I quite took that for granted!" He paused and stooped over to mend the fire, his temper rather on edge. Philip Spenser, the studious freshman of the class room, had not prepared him for this stubborn and irritable lad before him. This youngster would be a hard boy to live with. He continued talking, with more sympathy in his voice for Dick than he would have deemed possible half an hour before.

"Your roommate's Advisor, Dr. Malcolm Kennedy, was a

friend of mine. What I know about his freshman year is from that source——"

"You still think I ought to apologize to Morland?"

"You must do as you think best. If you'll permit me to finish——"

"I beg pardon!"

"Blaisdell came up here from some military school where he'd learned a good deal about other things than Cicero and Virgil. He'd never had much home life. I judge that he was pretty crude and boyish, fond of being with the other fellows, easily led. But he's naturally ambitious and I imagine he came here intending to make something of himself. He started out with six courses—we were foolish enough to let freshmen do that in those days. Then he went through with your experience; he made a close friend."

"He only has acquaintances, now," said the boy, suddenly.

"Just so. What I'm telling you may be partly the reason for it. You haven't knocked about very much with other boys, have you?"

"No, sir; I haven't."

"Perhaps, then, you've never met before the type of boy who, if he does like a man, is uncritical and extreme in his loyalty to him. That's true, I think, of Blaisdell, but I dare say you wouldn't notice it."

"Thank you, again, sir!"

The boy had flushed bright crimson. There was a hurt look of uncomprehended rebuke in his eyes that revealed how young, how very young, he really was. Percy went on more gently:

"Blaisdell did everything he could to stand well in that man's opinion. Tried to copy him in dress, speech, and manner. But he soon got into trouble with his courses. He isn't the type that could easily exchange school discipline for college freedom. He loafed and then he failed, for, while he has brains, he is not ready in expression and he certainly is not brilliant."

"You think he has brains!"

"I used not to. But I do, now. It's what I should call a substantial as distinguished from a facile mind."

The boy moved uneasily in his chair.

"There's no more to say," continued Percy, "except that his friend went back on him. He had nothing to gain from him; he got tired of it. It had been a first-semester freshman friendship and now it was a bore and an embarrassment. It's inevitable, of course, that many of such friendships should lapse. But the way he broke it off was unjustifiable. I was told that, one day, he met Blaisdell in the Yard, when both of them were with other fellows, and deliberately gave him the cut direct—dropped him insolently then and there."

"I think it would half kill me," said the boy slowly, "if that kind of thing happened to me."

"Yes," said Percy. "Your pride would be deeply wounded by it. I can readily believe that's the way you would take it. It's not the way Blaisdell did. It was the hurt to his trust and his affection which made it worse for him. It's there that Blaisdell gets things! At all events, after that he began to lose his grip. Which was quite indefensible but not inexplicable."

"He ought to have stood up to it!"

"No doubt. But he didn't; one can easily condemn him if one's in that business."

The boy gazed stubbornly, with compressed lips, into the fire.

"Didn't the other man ever apologize?" he asked finally.

"I believe they have never spoken to one another since that day. Well, that's the story of his freshman year. Not just like yours, is it? Perhaps now you can see why, as regards this other matter, I shouldn't mention it to him. He's had, I think, a hard enough time as it is!"

There was complete silence for a moment. Then:

"That other fellow must be an awful brute. I don't see how any man could do it!"

"Not as bad as that. Most men," dryly, "are more stupid

than brutal, more unimaginative than cruel. He probably didn't realize it."

"And I suppose you think I'm the same!" the boy flashed out. "And I was," he conceded miserably, "yesterday. I was doing the same thing, only I did it behind his back. Willing to hurt, or chuck, one man because I wanted the companionship of another!"

"It wasn't unlike it. And I think you'll agree with me now that it was foolish as well as disloyal. Friends are not made or kept that way. However, you can buck up now and do differently."

The boy sat up at that and flushed again.

"I suppose you mean as regards Dick," he said coldly. "Of course, after what you've told me to-night, I'm awfully sorry for him——"

"I hope you'll not let him see that. He's a real man whether he's been kind to you or not. He won't take anyone's compassion. If you can't like him, don't pity him!"

"But I can't make myself like him!" cried the boy.

"No?" said Percy slowly. "Not even if you were to assume that, in spite of all the misunderstanding and unkindness, he did genuinely like you?"

The boy looked fixedly at him.

"I'm just sick, sir, of vague 'advice to freshmen.' If you were as bitter and uncertain as I am I guess you'd be! If you're suggesting any other action on my part, in place of my apologizing, will you please tell me just what it is you mean!"

"If I do that, I must trust you," said Percy. "I shall be, in some sense, revealing his confidences. Do you think I ought?"

The boy's lips suddenly quivered.

"I'll not betray him again. You can't think I would! And—and I'm not sorry for him in any patronizing way. After what you've told me it makes me feel with him—some. I—I used to like him. I am ashamed," he burst out. "I wish I hadn't ignored him the way I have, all the year!"

Percy got up and opened his outer door.

"Well," he said, "I am going to trust you. I think your roommate does like you. I believe you could be a great deal to him in his present situation. But, if you're going to be anything to him at all, be quick and begin!"

XIV

MEANWHILE Francis was accompanying his mother and sister back to the old home across the river. It would be hard to analyze his attitude toward the members of his family. He was indubitably fond of them in an easy, selfish way; and Felicia had no small influence over him, for he realized that she was a personal asset, that his own place, and pleasure, and popularity, were strengthened and enhanced by his having so charming and able a relative. Moreover, her fearless directness, that restless candor of spirit and utterance, exercised an inevitable, if irksome control over him. His mother he had never understood, and he was repelled by the singleness and the intensity of her nature. She made him uncomfortable partly because he was personally incapable of deep and sustained emotion, more because he knew from experience that, no less exacting with others than with herself, she was likely to make demands upon his facile will and spirit which he was unable or unwilling to meet.

Perhaps this was why he was least often at his best in his own household. Morland, the suave and gracious, the brilliant talker and suggestive listener, was taciturn, moody, of uncertain temper, when alone with his nearest relations. Nor, in the easy, popular, Cambridge life, did he much miss his home and seldom came to it. Indeed, he had not been back since the Christmas recess until he was returning this evening.

The maid announced the belated dinner almost as Mrs. Morland and her children entered the house. As they sat down to the simple family meal they were already a group upon whom a subtle constraint had begun to fall. Felicia made conversation gallantly, Mrs. Morland presided with a

contained and inflexible dignity behind her coffee urn, yet before the dinner ended the atmosphere which the mother and daughter naturally suffused throughout the house was broken. A blurring mist, a sort of dimming shadow crept over their spirits. Francis, the beloved and cherished son and heir of the little household, was nevertheless an alien presence in the apartment.

So they adjourned as speedily as possible to the long parlor where Mrs. Morland, seated in her old, red velvet chair, took up her knitting. She looked anxiously across the table at her handsome son. That he had something on his mind to tell her or ask her she had already discovered; there was a bracing of the erect figure, the needles flew fast in the veined hands. Felicia, not unacquainted with her brother's ways and temperament, meant to take up the conversation lightly as soon as they were seated. But before she could get started Francis took the lead. His own preoccupation added to a native irritability.

"What's happened to Grandmother's portrait!" he said, looking at the bare wall above the mantel.

"I have sent it to Doll and Richards for restoration," said Mrs. Morland, "because paint was flecking off. They are to transfer it to a new canvas."

"Transferring pictures is expensive business," he said shortly.

"It is my mother's picture, my son."

"And the chief of our own Lares and Penates, Francis," added Felicia.

"All right," sulkily, "I should think, though, we had plenty of other ways, just now, to use the money. Do, for goodness sake, put something in place of it while it's away, the paper is so hopelessly shabby." Then he turned directly to his mother: "For that matter, Mater, the whole house is, too. I wish we could move out of it. I never could understand why you cling to it."

Mrs. Morland's hand closed tightly on the arm of her chair.

"It has many memories for me, my son."

"Move," cried Felicia, "move! Why we've lived here all our lives, and Grandmother and Grandfather before us. Why in the world should we move?"

"Because living here calls for perpetual explanation," retorted her brother. "Look at the inhabitants and the locality! These fiendish trolleys crashing by the corner, the flats that overlook the whole garden!"

"Well, I, for one," said Felicia, "wouldn't dream of leaving the old place. I'm more of a real Tory than you are," she added maliciously. "What possible difference does it make where a Morland lives! I don't mind the flats; I wouldn't want to go away from all these little babies!"

"Tenement children your latest diversion?" said Francis acidly.

"Don't quarrel!" said Mrs. Morland, suddenly. "I can not bear it, in this old room!"

"We're not quarreling, Mother! But I always did think this hurrying away because a street has begun to go down, and building in Brookline and then, by and by, being horrified and saying 'Oh, do you know, the apartment houses are creeping in here now!' and then hurrying to Newton or Chestnut Hill, was just plain vulgar. Women strike their roots deeper," she said, with some indignation, to her brother. "You men don't seem to care where you live. But every room, and floor, and closet, and the queer way the front stairs curve at the top and the funny smell in the attic, and the break-neck kitchen steps, they are all a part of us! I don't want," she laughed shortly, "even to see the doors redone. I like to see the old brown wood show through where the paint is scrubbed off around the handles!"

"But if your brother wishes it?" said Mrs. Morland. "Of course we are left almost alone, here. There's hardly any of the old set that hasn't gone either to Brookline or the Newtons. If it would help in his career, of course—we could do it."

"That's what I had in mind, Mother," said the youth

quickly. "I knew you'd understand." (Felicia smiled with faint derision). "There's a big piece of land here, counting in the garden, and we could get a lot of money for it if it were cut up into building lots. With what I'm planning for the future, next year will be an expensive one for me and I suppose we've got to get the money, somewhere!"

Mrs. Morland laid down her knitting. All the deep craving of her nature, the repressed hopes and fears of her spirit came flooding to the surface.

"My son," said she, "you have some definite plans to tell us, some decision as to your profession! You don't know how eager we are to listen. It's you who are to carry on for us the old name, to transmit the old life. That's what I've lived for, worked and prayed for ever since the day you were born, four and twenty years ago. What is it, Francis?"

The young man moved uneasily in his chair. His mother's intensity repelled him. That imperious, exacting nature, absolutely self-abnegating but demanding so much also of his sister and himself, was to the fore again. The moral intensity, the high emotionalism of her nature left him protesting and breathless; it seemed to block his utterance.

"Well, it isn't the law, anyway, Mother. I know it was Father's profession, but I don't want it and I'm not going into it! I'm thinking of diplomacy."

"Diplomacy!" said his mother vaguely, "it isn't clear to me. I don't know just what that means."

"It means, first of all," said Francis rather doggedly, "staying on in the Graduate School a couple of years. I can read and speak French pretty fluently now, but I need some Spanish, and Modern History, and International Law. Then—well, then I ought to have at least two years of foreign travel, enough to live for a few months in—say in Paris and Berlin and Vienna and Rome. Then, you see," he went on with rising enthusiasm, "with all our connections you could get me the right introduction at Washington—we'd have quite a pull through Uncle John, he knows everybody at the Smithsonian,—and in no time I could get a post. Of

course," he concluded rather lamely, "I'd have to begin as an under-secretary, a second or third attaché at a nominal salary, and work up. But that's what I call a gentleman's career! It would mean life in the great capitals where big things are being thought and done, and contact with significant people, the sort of thing we're naturally accustomed to. I think," he added with some complacency, "I've natural gifts for that kind of life. We've got the background, as much as most families on this side of the water. I know my way about all right, and I think I can make people like me——"

"There are several questions that I want to ask," said Mrs. Morland quietly, "but first, how much money would it mean?"

"Well, Mother, I'd have to have my two thousand a year, as I do now, while I'm in the Graduate School, and, I suppose, in the years abroad perhaps a little more. Then after that I guess I could get along with three thousand as a minimum and whatever salary the first posts would carry."

"You mean," said his mother slowly, "that after you're graduated you will still expect between two and three thousand a year from me—indefinitely? You know your college expenses have been largely paid by the fund your father left for that purpose. That is gone. Even if we sold the home——"

"But if you and Felicia went to live in some good apartment, one of the swell ones, I mean, in some first-rate locality, we'd save all the upkeep on this house and grounds, as well."

Mrs. Morland's voice lifted a little.

"You are proposing that for your sister while you go to live in the capitals of Europe?"

"That's not a fair way to put it! I've got my way to make, haven't I? I'm not merely going abroad for pleasure. Gracious heavens, you needn't give me anything if you don't want to! I won't beg for it even from my own people. The whole thing can go to pot before I'll do that!"

"Try to be just, Francis," said his mother, her hands trembling where they lay on the knitting in her lap. "You've never yet had to beg for anything it was possible for me to give you. But you know how quietly Felicia and I have lived here since you went over to Cambridge in order that you might have—what seemed to be necessary beyond your allowance. But, my son, I can't continue this always, and, I am sorry I should have to remind you of it, it isn't fair to your sister."

"Mother," broke in Felicia, "you'll be good enough to leave me entirely out of it. Whatever is best and right for Francis' future, I want to do just as much, just exactly as much as you do!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Morland quickly, "but does your brother want you to do it? Is he willing to accept your sacrifice? Francis," she went on, "three thousand a year will practically cripple us. It would mean Felicia's dropping out of all the life that her youth and her position entitle her to. Do you want your sister to make that sacrifice?"

"Mother," said the girl heatedly, "you're going to stop right here. I insist on it. Francis, you're to forget everything that Mother has said. Your question is," she went on, looking directly at the youth, "do you want Mother to give you the money? As far as I'm concerned, if you do, that settles it."

"Oh, let Mother go right on!" cried Francis. "I knew it would be this way! If I'd said 'law' everything would have been all right and no trouble made! It's just because I want to strike out into something new for myself!"

Mrs. Morland rose suddenly to her feet. Felicia gave an anxious glance at the quivering lips and flushed face, and threw a look of burning indignation at her brother.

"Yes, Francis, you've told the truth there, though not as you meant it. I've been seeing that it was to come, and yet I couldn't believe it. I'm heartbroken at what you've said this night. It's not because you haven't chosen your father's profession; it's because you've betrayed your father's spirit.

Just now you said 'I want something new for myself.' My son, that's been the watchword of your life, always 'something new,' and always 'for myself.' Francis," she went on passionately, "don't you feel what you owe the past, what our own family life and the college, where your forebears were trained, expect of you? You're planning an easy, luxurious life, and all for self-gratification, but"—and her voice lifted again—"I shall oppose it. We expect our men to serve! Your father offered his life to his country. He used the law not to make money, but to uphold justice; my mother there" —unconsciously she pointed to where the old portrait had hung—"Chief Justice Morland, for whom you are named, they, and I, expect, nay! we demand, my son, that you carry on their unselfish and high-hearted tradition!"

The boy shrank before her. Felicia's lips were parted, the breath quickly coming and going. Her mother's accusing presence filled the room. But the youth, stubborn, callous, looked up with lowering eyes, in dark and resentful rebellion.

"I say, Mother, can't we dispense with the heroics! And, for heaven's sake, don't talk social service to me. I hear enough of that cant in Cambridge; the whole college has gone daft on it. I live like a gentleman, don't I? Whatever I do, at least I try to do it in a gentleman's way! What more do you expect of me? I guess the college won't suffer through my disgrace. I don't take to this Salvation-Army, Camp-Meeting, sacrifice-yourself-for-somebody-else talk. It's all hot air for the most part, and I call it most awfully common, anyway! See here, Mother, I've told you what I want—there isn't any need of our deciding to-night, nor for a couple of months yet. But you and Felicia'd better be thinking it over. Only never mind about it now; it's distinctly unpleasant to be having a row. Perhaps things will look up and bigger dividends will come in. If those fool investments hadn't been made out in the West we'd have been all right, anyway, and certainly I'm not responsible for them! But we'll take it up again later. That's what I want and it's

the only thing I want. I guess you'll find all men, when they drop their 'side' and tell the truth, are out for the goods—and for Number One!"

Mrs. Morland, pale, rigid, gave a stifled cry at that last word. Again the old hand flew up. Her husband's name escaped her. She passed swiftly from the room and up the stairs.

Francis flung out of his seat.

"Isn't that just like Mother!" he cried. "She won't reason; you can't do anything with her! I feel like never coming near this house again. I just hate these scenes!"

"I think, if you don't mind, we'll change the subject," said Felicia. She didn't look at him. "What an absurd boy Monty Ward has grown into. Until Lucy's dance I hadn't seen him since his sister's wedding in Trinity, three years ago. He was a mere infant then!"

"He's a little ass," said Francis savagely. "I can't imagine a person of any sense paying any attention to him one way or the other. But I would like to know, if I may be allowed to inquire, what it was I heard you saying to Spenser about his roommate. And perhaps, now, you'll tell me why you wanted the tea!"

There fell a sudden pause. When Felicia's voice broke it, it came dangerously clear and sweet.

"I was asking to be remembered to him," she said. "Perhaps you've forgotten that I like Richard Blaisdell."

"Well, I'm terribly sorry to undeceive you," said Francis with cruel enjoyment, "but he isn't the sort that a girl like you *can* like. I'm afraid I must ask you not to see him any more. It made me rather hot to hear you talking of him."

Felicia looked at him calmly, fixedly, for a second. He found it impossible to maintain his air of patronizing authority, and scorn. He seemed to lessen and draw in upon himself under that contemplative and candid gaze.

"That's another matter we needn't discuss further, Francis. I'm not likely to see very much of him. I've twice invited

him over here lately through other men, and he hasn't come. But I should like to see more of him if I could."

Francis leaped to his feet.

"You must be out of your head, Felicia," he cried, "can't you understand? He isn't a gentleman, I tell you!"

"Yes, indeed, I understand," said Felicia calmly. "I think that's why I enjoy him. I've no great interest or faith in 'gentlemen' as you construe the term. Mother and I haven't had our—our happiest hours with that kind. Brother," she concluded as Francis flung out of the room, "what injury have you done to Richard Blaisdell that you hate him so?"

XV

FRANCIS began his journey back to Cambridge in a vicious and petulant mood, not shame, but a sense of personal injury, a half-savage, half-childish irritation in his heart. The actual broaching of the topic of his proposed profession had not merely brought about a most distasteful and resented scene, but it had also brought him face to face with the fact that college days were practically over. The Mid-Years were about beginning, and after that there was but one brief semester more and then the gates would swing shut behind him forever. Everything appeared to be conspiring to interfere with his purposes and pleasures. All his little world seemed out of joint that night!

For these four years had held an extraordinarily easy, carefree life. The lad had been born to place and privilege, the good things of this world; he was not wholly to blame for the arrogant indifference and entrenched selfishness of his days. He had no slightest comprehension of what it means to struggle blindly upward and to feel bitterly that through no fault of yours you were down and out! Neither failure nor misfortune had ever taught him to be kind. As he passed his humbler classmates without recognition in the Yard it was with no clear sense of obligation to do otherwise, nor much apprehension that such cool ignoring on his part meant anything more to them than to him. He had come to believe that life owed him a good time; that such days as these, with their maximum of pleasure and minimum of responsibility, were to be his always by some predestined right. For, while he had a gay and pleasant fancy, there was little of either intellectual or moral imagination in the boy, nor any native sense of the joy of struggle or the compensating in-

sights which suffering and effort bring. So, with the steady declension of a pleasure-loving and ungirded youth, he had slowly shifted one duty and responsibility after another, until this winter he had just drifted along the lines of least resistance and indolent self-indulgent being. The momentum of past achievements joined to his facility of expression had carried him through his courses, and practically all his movements had been dictated by the whim or the vanity of the moment.

But now it was soon to end! No more idling and playing through the long vacations of the summer months; no more residing in Cambridge as in a winter watering place just touched with the academic flavor. At the very least, he must work more and harder in the Graduate School. He had chosen hitherto those studies in which he was predisposed to excellence, such courses in literature and the arts as lent themselves to his sort of exploitation; but Modern History and International Law and Political Economy—these were precise matters, sciences indeed where grasp of principle and patient mastery of fact were indispensable. Now the luxurious, pleasurable life, its special privileges and careless freedom, were about to cease, at least for a time; his flesh and spirit rebelled against it.

But he had not the least intention of giving up the diplomatic career. Indeed, these very considerations intensified his determination there. For him, of course, were the brilliant and unusual things of life; he must have something different from the rest. His self-complacency was instinctive and profound. It never occurred to him to question if he had brains and character for the task; his birth and breeding would insure that. Nor had he any doubt that the money would be forthcoming. He had broken the ice at last; the announcement of his needs and desires was behind him. He foresaw confidently that the next interview, while it might still be unpleasant, would be briefer and decisive—and in any case he was going to have his way. The callous and unyielding strain in Francis came out there, and all other consid-

erations of honor, generosity or loyalty paled before it. Indeed, these were not inherited qualities in his life; they were shibboleths, attitudes, the proper forms and modes for men of his class and station. He saw them all from the outside; there was small inward reality for him except the pride and ambition of his pleasure-craving, place-seeking life. Not, of course, that he was aware of such sordid, inward impoverishment; well-mannered, gay, adaptable, often carelessly and without reflection, kind, having a graceful talent in prose and verse, he saw himself a clever and amiable youth, well furnished for a prosperous and enviable career. It was his love of pleasure and the things to which it led him which brought him nearest to the point of self-realization. Francis never allowed himself to estimate or scrutinize his pleasurable acts. Some waning strain of fine inheritance had sufficiently survived to make him uneasy when he contrasted the self-indulgence of his days with the austere and high achievements of the family past. For a moment a look of brooding melancholy would film his dark eyes then; yet that contrast never got further than an uneasy passing thought.

Nor was he aware of the significance of his desires, the contemptible or terrible goals toward which his pleasures might tend. He was dimly conscious that the fierce joy in the senses was growing stealthily upon him, that obscure impulses, less defensible delights, were rising to expression out of the unplumbed depths of his sub-conscious life. But he never defined or estimated them, just drifted on, by no means aware of where or what he was, only a little more callous and indulgent, a little less scrupulous and fine, as the swift days rolled by. He sincerely thought that he had an immense and unchallenged self-respect. But he had never known what self-respect was; what he had was a great vanity and a cold arrogance of pride.

Meanwhile, the golden gates of the college world had not closed yet. There was a full half-year ahead, another semester of carefree days and pleasurable nights, and he would make the most of it, fill up the cup of his delights to the very

brim! There was no sense of sin or shame, no inner protests at these frank anticipations of his. He had his standards, but they related to the place and method, not the content of his deeds. It was not what you did, nor why, but where and how, that mattered. To maintain always his gentleman's demeanor, to guard his appearance and standing, that was his code; underneath, to go his own way, silently and unperceived to slip into the secret orchard and eat such forbidden fruit as his dainty palate indicated.

He went lightly up the stairs of Claverly, entered his room, and quietly closed the door behind him. His head ached and he was nervously tired. The Vesper Service, the tea in Dr. Barrett's rooms, the long trolley rides, the strained and bitter interview, had rasped and exhausted his volatile and irritable nature. He was not a sturdy youth, by no means a boy of large physical reserves. So he was glad to be back again in the independence and familiarity of his own rooms, and to be alone. The solitary habit had grown on him of late, perhaps he did not himself realize how he liked that sense of protection from scrutiny, when without reserves and restraints he could do and be his very self.

He locked the door and flung fresh fuel on the grate. Then he slipped off his coat and settled down into the easy chair, legs crossed and luxuriously stretched out toward the flickering blaze. On the stand beside him was a quaint inlaid box which contained the "makings" of his cigarettes. He opened it, daintily removed some papers and tobacco, and presently had a completed smoke rolling in his smooth fingers. He liked the feel of it, the peculiar teasing surface of the paper which he used. Presently he touched the match to it and began smoking. Sometimes he would blow the rings into the air, sometimes deliberately draw in and exhale the fumes. As he watched the slowly curling smoke, there was the fantastic likeness to a kitten sporting with its captured mouse in the way in which he was playing with his pleasures that night!

He used a powerful tobacco, and by the time he had smoked

two or three of the slim rolls the room had become indefinitely spacious, comfortable and drowsy. Then he began to look across the study to where, half-hidden by the shadows, there stood the slender-legged old table. It was such a piece as Sheraton might have worked at, reeded legs crowned with rosettes, its front inlaid with shells of box and maple, an heirloom from his Grandmother, Otis. Tradition had it that at this very table with the early leaders of the Liberal movement, she had worked over the columns of the *Intelligencer*. But an old wide-lipped decanter in battered coaster stood on it now, half a dozen fragile, pipe-stemmed glasses grouped about it. Francis had brought both table and decanter from home at the end of his freshman year. His flair for striking combinations was pleased with the heavy, ancient bottle and the delicate shimmer of the glasses as they were set off against the dark mahogany. He used to keep the decanter half full of port in those days, but there was a stronger, brighter liquid in it now.

The lad wanted his drink, but he was comfortable and drowsy and lazy, the room was warm, the chair was pleasant, he could get the liquor at any moment that he chose. It rather pleased him to think about it for a while. He had not the slightest scruples regarding intoxicants, not merely because he had always seen wines sparingly drunk on occasion at his mother's dinner table, but because moral scruples of any sort were foreign to his nature. There was in him that strange residuum not infrequently observed in the last scions of an exhausted stock. His was not an immoral but rather, a quite a-moral life. Puritanism run to seed had here turned upon its own excellencies. Francis' was a pagan life; not the hearty, sunny sort of paganism, something of which most normal boys possess; not the high and poetic naturalism, the perpetual admiration for the things of the external world which had produced the classic literatures. No, it was not Pan nor Apollo whom the dark and slender lad suggested; he seemed more like the satyr than the faun.

And it was this very paganism which had protected his

reputation and concealed his weaknesses through all the college years. For he was in some respects a fastidious and delicate creature. Not sin, but ugliness was unforgivable in his eyes; vulgarity was the cardinal and irremediable mistake. So he would not permit himself to step inside a public bar. To stand, foot on rail, and push his glass across the wet and slippery counter with the noisy and bibulous throng was despicable in his eyes. To see his classmates, frankly convivial in public places, moved him to contempt. To see any one display his pleasant vices, revealing his weaknesses, turned against him the man at once—it was the indiscriminateness of it that he condemned. Besides, his was a jealous and secretive nature; there was a twist to his instinct which made him enjoy his pleasure by himself when there were no distractions to dissipate the focussed consciousness. So not even at the Porcellian did he often drink with his more intimate classmates. They understood, as a matter of course, that he was no total abstainer, yet he was regarded as abstemious rather than the reverse. No one could have imagined him as drinking to excess, or have suspected that such appetite could obtain any strong hold upon him. Least of all did Francis himself realize it. He had no vision of his situation, had not begun to reap yet; still thought he might owe and not pay!

So he lay at ease in the great chair and lazily rolled his cigarette, and again his eyes, bright under the half-closed lids, traveled toward the table in the dim corner. Presently he got up and brought the decanter and carafe of water and two glasses over to his chair, and, pouring a glass of the amber liquid and another of water for the chaser, regarded them for a moment, then slowly, contemplatively drank them down. He would not have touched whisky until recently; the crude rawness, the sickly fire of it had been quite insupportable. But now, while there was no delicious taste, there was the leaping, hot sensation which he loved, and he was beginning to care for the sickly rawness of it, and to find in the "kick" and the bite of it a sort of acrid joy. He poured

himself another glass full, slowly drinking it off in the same way, a half smile hovering on the edges of his handsome lips. A subtle change was spreading over his appearance. It was as if the last restraints, those of manner and expression, were slipping. His unlined, unworn face became then rather startling to behold, not because of any sinister or sensual expression that appeared upon it, but because of the reverse; there was nothing terrible nor tragic in the look of Francis Morland when the screens and barriers were down, and that was, so to speak, the hopelessness of it! He seemed so futile in his degradation, so insignificant in his sin——

Again he got up, and, going over to the bookcase, selected one of a group of paper-covered volumes collected on a lower shelf. It was not just the sort of a book one likes to find in an undergraduate's room, yet Francis had come easily and naturally by it. He had taken a good many courses in the English department, among others those that dealt with the rise of the drama and the development of the English novel. He had worked well, with sincere and unmixed motives in these courses, his quick and expressive mind stimulated by the robust imagination, the spacious and swelling lines of the Elizabethan drama and the frank and vivid naturalism of eighteenth century literature. His readings, voluntarily extended beyond the restrictions of his courses, had led him back to the literature of the Renaissance, as a chief source of the plots of the early English plays and of the short story in Western Europe. So he began to read Bandello and the Italian novelle. Such literature was not difficult of access, since, although he had no knowledge of Italian, he read French easily. He had come to believe that it was chiefly the brilliant craftsmanship of the urbane, witty plays, the joyous humanism of the pagan tales, which fascinated him. He had easily assured himself that his interest in the novelle was "purely literary and technical," and indeed that phrase had become quite a formula with him now.

Reseating himself he began to read. Half mechanically he turned now and then to the glasses and decanter, but al-

ways slowly, steadily, he turned the pages of the novella. The night was now far advanced. Two had already boomed out from the great clock just installed in Memorial Hall tower. Out of the haze that befogged his memory Francis heard the solemn reverberating strokes. It was time to stop, to be in bed, to relinquish pleasure for a while—one could always have it again. The voluntary limits placed upon these occasional heated evenings had usually brought a subtle enjoyment in themselves, for he found a pleasure also in not doing the things he loved. There was a new and different raciness in cheating the anticipations of his senses, a cruel pleasure in robbing sensation of its own joys. Nor had he ever consciously gone the extreme limit in his indulgences. He sincerely believed that he had never been "really drunk" in all his life. So, some moments after the strokes ceased to reverberate through the air, he started uncertainly for bed. But something seemed to hold him back to-night. "Not much time left!" was singing through his brain. "College days will soon be over—must make the most of what there is now." And something else was tugging also at his weak and stubborn will; appetite, insensibly grown stronger day by day, appetite, surrendered to again this night and made the more imperious for this last license, appetite, which long he had indulged but soon he must endure. So fate took up his scales of destiny that evening. He also was under the inexorable law and the first night of his accounting had come. The balances poised evenly for a moment, pride and caution, the instinctive decencies of youth and breeding upon the one side, enlarged desire and long practised habit upon the other. Presently those scales began to tip toward the beginning of a long descent; Francis sank back into the chair, once more his hand reached for the decanter.

The night wore on, deepening into solemn stillness above an earth all muffled in the gleaming snow. The stars wheeled frosty and brilliant overhead; a faint breeze stirred among the rustling pines that overlooked Fresh Pond; Mt. Auburn slept in dreamless peace. Pure and cold the air sifted

through the open windows of a thousand rooms upon the sleeping youth of the University; over the grim and determined, the thin and eager faces in College House it passed, faces resourceful even in their slumber; over the bared arms and chests of lusty, ruddy youngsters as they lay in relaxed and unconscious grace upon their narrow cots in Holworthy and Hollis. Over the sleepers in Dunster and Randolph, and in the old wooden houses around the clubs it drifted, men whose faces, all open and revealed in sleep, had taken on again the childlike wistfulness of boyhood's days. But at the tight closed windows of the room in Claverly it pressed in vain.

Presently the breeze dropped and the night settled to a still and piercing cold. The stars paled out, a different, ghastly light appeared to be drinking up the darkness, flattening out the shadows on roof and cornice and deserted street; slowly the sun came up, tinging with faint warmth the frosty air. And then, in all of those thousand rooms, there was the banging down of window panes, the running and splashing of cold water; in all those rooms there were energetic and emphatic voices, shouts of raillery and laughter, squeals and yells at the pleasant shock of the icy douche; and then there was the straining of laces around sturdy ankles, the hitching of the belt about lean and boyish waists, the fresh crackle of the shirt pulled over a tousled head, the sudden silence that fell when the hair was smoothed and the tie gravely chosen from the line upon the mirror; and then came the shrill whistles, the plunging, clattering feet down the dormitory stairs, caps awry and overcoats despised, the cold rush into the bracing, winter air, the hearty breakfast, with the notebook beside the steaming cup and the *Crimson* propped up in front. But the room in Claverly was still closed and quiet, the air heavy with the fumes of spilled liquor and stale smoke, and the slight figure, disheveled and soiled, was huddled in the easy chair. There was no sound in that dim chamber, save for the dropping of dead coals upon the hearth and the soft puffing of uneven breath between moist and parted lips.

It was late that afternoon when Percy saw Francis standing by the door of the Porcellian. He stopped to speak as he passed by. The boy was suave and civil, but there was a new note of something uncertain, almost truckling, in the fagged voice. The instructor, long an acute observer of his fellowmen, pondered on it as he went along.

"There was rather an unpleasant look about Morland today," he said to himself. "I believe he's beginning to look differently of late. What Spenser quite innocently said last night about his spells of nervous restlessness seemed to me rather strange. When I first caught sight of him now I didn't recognize him; there was something old and cynical about his face. Great heavens," Percy remonstrated with himself, "what am I thinking of! And yet—Morland doesn't look straight!"

XVI

It was with all the inhibitions of increased self-consciousness that Phil returned to the room in Mathews Hall, that evening, from Percy's study. Dick was sitting at his desk, and, as if it were for the first time, Phil furtively regarded him. Here was a new being; not the lazy, dissipated upper-classman, who, at the eleventh hour, was trying to escape the consequences of failure, but a senior whom Miss Morland liked, and who might be entirely ready to entertain friendly feelings toward himself. He wondered; he had never seen Dick in any such light before; he was curious, somewhat shamefaced and sorry, but still a little sore and skeptical and on the defensive.

And certainly there was distance, no sense of contacts or mutual understanding between the two, as he entered. Dick had appeared better of late, something of relief and ease in voice and manner. But the strained and hungry look was in his eyes again to-night. It had been a bitter and restless afternoon; she was there in Cambridge, within a street of him; he had been invited to meet her, he could not go. Not sure of victory yet, no, and would he ever be sure? He was sick of his own self; and of a strife whose long persistence was sapping faith and becoming a corroding humiliation. What were the rewards of the grim struggle? Hopeless working at too long abandoned tasks; dogged discipline with no novelty and no exaltation in it now; blind indifference on Phil's part. Atwood alone of the old crowd dropped in to see him; Atwood of the smiling and sardonic scrutiny—worse than that, Atwood who considered that he had gone back on his pals, been frightened out of free and reckless self-assertion, become renegade as well as fool. As for Dr.

Barrett, Dick knew he was a little tired, a little dulled and used to it all now. He had not been often to his instructor's rooms of late; he would not be a nuisance or a beggar; better go under than pay that price! Bitterly he sensed that in the remaking of a human spirit only divine compassion can comprehend, only infinite faith and patience be sufficient for the task. And these he knew no more; again his vision had faded into the light of common day.

So he looked up glumly as Phil entered. Oh, yes! the freshman had all the advantages, the companions and the praise. Pride, weariness, some dulled sense of hurt at former advances rebuffed and comradeship withheld, profound inward melancholy, all contributed to the curt brevity of his greeting. He felt years older than the confident, intolerant lad; he felt unbridgable spaces between them. And he resented the furtive intentness of that look.

Phil, on his part, was obscurely nettled because there was no invitation or appeal in that greeting, no questions asked about the afternoon. Rather conspicuously he got out his notes. Examinations began next week; he had five days before his first and meant to go home on the morrow, taking his books with him. Meanwhile, he would start in on reviews. But after an hour's studying with his mind only half on the text he leaned back in his chair. He was a little ashamed that a sort of sentimental curiosity, more than anything else, was uppermost in him.

"Guess I won't bone any more to-night. You going to work all the evening?"

"He wants to talk," thought Dick. He remembered the afternoons and evenings when he had ventured to address indifferent and unresponsive ears. He had no relish for it now.

"I've got plenty to do. Going to turn in?" He spoke briefly without looking up from his book.

"N-no; I'm not sleepy yet, not a bit sleepy. Oh, by the way, I met Francis' sister at the tea this afternoon."

"You mean Miss Morland?"

"Of course. She is Francis' sister, isn't she?"

"He's her brother."

"His uncle, Professor Trowbridge, was there, too. Opinionated old party,—I don't think he knows much about undergraduates and their life. I don't take to him, he's forgotten what it's like to be young. Er—you know Miss Morland quite well, don't you? She asked to be remembered to you."

"Thank you," said Dick with tight-shut lips.

Phil got the rebuff of the unanswered question. It added to his soreness of spirit, made him feel injured and therefore virtuous.

"Say, would you like to go over some of the French? I'd just as lief."

"Trying to be kind," Dick said to himself. Tired and depressed as he was, he was sure there was a note of patronage in Phil's voice. He spoke evenly.

"Don't need to, thanks! Anything I can do for you?"

"Telling me again to mind my own business," thought Phil. "What does he expect me to do, get down on my knees to him? It's not all my fault if we're out with each other." Yet as Dick's spirit was so unexpectedly withdrawn his own moved forward. He was having to-night his first consciously appreciative scrutiny of the other for many weeks. There was nothing of Francis' easy and flexible address here, but there was something else. In spite of pique and skepticism he felt the honesty and force in that big figure, something unusual, too, in the half-articulate reserves that lay behind it. There was a hint of latent power in the sombre eyes that drew and steadied him, something substantial and impressive; and, back of it all, something that was hurt. He really wanted the reconciliation now, but his freshman heart was proud and stubborn; he was not going to let anyone suspect—least of all, Dick Blaisdell—that his new friends, extravagantly praised and pointedly cultivated, were possibly proving already disappointing. Therefore, he said carelessly:

"Sorry! Didn't mean to butt in! I think I'll go up to Monty's and go over *Athalie* with him."

"Good idea," commented Dick.

So Phil, sore and proud, went out. He was unsatisfied with the evening's performance, but then, when he got back from home it would be different. And Dick, sombre and weary, settled back to his text-book in Biology. The next afternoon Phil left for Pittsfield.

Meanwhile, during the week that followed, Percy had dismissed both Blaisdell and Morland from his mind. The Mid-Years were on, and he breathed a sigh of relief at the very thought of it. Nearly three weeks' freedom from recitations and lectures would give him time to catch up with many things, even to work a little at the monograph. He had been "fed-up" of late, as Monty would put it, on boys, their tricks and manners, their problems and escapades. He might well be pardoned if he were glad to get away from it all for a little while. So the next five days, with their quiet hours for reflection and slow, considerate study, were pleasant ones. But one night, as he installed himself in his desk-chair, prepared to start the new paragraph of his brochure which had been maturing during the week, they came to an abrupt end. A knock, quite a decided and confident knock, sounded on his door. He pushed away his papers with frowning impatience, and got up to open it. There stood Monty, a curious mixture of soberness and deviltry in his round eyes.

"Now what under heaven could have brought that boy up here, to-night?" he thought. "He can't be such an ass as to call on his own instructor at this time of the year. Especially," he added to himself sardonically, "as I haven't examined him yet anyway!" Again he rebelled at his predicament in teaching boys whose people he had known all his life and with whom, themselves, he had been more or less familiar before they entered his classroom. He had sometimes suspected Monty of taking a certain advantage of that situation.

"Why, how do you do, Ward?" he said with cold civility.

Then, after a moment, as the boy stood and beamed expectantly at him, he added, "Won't you come in?"

"Thanks," said Monty, "since you press it, I will."

Percy smiled reluctantly.

"I dare say I didn't seem very cordial," he admitted. "But in the examination period we are not quite so likely to look for student callers, you know—at least, not until their grades have been made up."

"I know, sir," said Monty. "I've been binding the clinging towel over my own marble brow and chestnut locks eftsoons and oft of late. I think," he continued gravely and confidentially, "that I'm getting addled. And I've felt more so since I was round, just now, at Mathews Hall."

"Mathews Hall?" said Percy blankly. "Ah, you mean Blaisdell's and Spenser's rooms?" He looked keenly at the boy and continued with a new note of reserve and impersonality. "You have some message to deliver?" He glanced pointed toward his clock on the mantel.

"I went up to find Phil," said Monty with slow stubbornness. "He went home the day after your tea last week because he could take three cuts, not having cut at all before, and he went off to study for his first examination. It comes to-morrow, so I know he's got back this afternoon. I've this same bitter trial, myself," he continued modestly, "and Phil's been the busy bee, while I've been what perhaps you might call the giddy butterfly. So I went up there this evening to go over things with him. Well—he wasn't there——"

"Oh," said Percy. "I'm afraid I can't help you any. I've not seen him since that day you were both here."

"It's his roommate I wanted to speak to you about. Phil wasn't there, but he was. He looked—I can't tell you how he looked. He looked dreadful! He was pale and his eyes burned—honest, they were sort of wild! I guess he's been there all alone since Phil went home. He had the most desperate, unnatural look about him—as if he were all in, almost under water like—just holding on to next to nothing and looking round for help!"

"Look here, Ward," Percy spoke with cold precision. "You're very much exaggerating things. I know Blaisdell fairly well. I don't believe he'd approve or enjoy that description of him. He's doubtless tired, like the rest of us, and possibly a little blue through missing his roommate. May I add that it is at just such times that men most properly resent interference and have a right to be relieved from either scrutiny or comment."

Monty said nothing for a moment. Percy couldn't make out the boy's mixture of soberness and effrontery. He felt as though the chubby freshman were measuring himself against his instructor, for some reason trying him out. Every defensive instinct was in full play, yet, in spite of himself, something in the boy's attitude aroused a reluctant and unwelcome anxiety in his own mind.

"Of course, I could," he added stiffly, "drop in and see him for a moment. But I think it would be intrusive and I doubt the wisdom of it."

"No, you couldn't drop in," said Monty, with some grimness. "He's not there now."

"Not there? Just as I should expect! He was tired and went out for air and a change, and it will do him good. It's a mistake, you know," he added, with some dignity, "gratuitously to help other people to manage their own affairs."

"He didn't go out to take the air," said Monty quietly. "But perhaps I'm interrupting you more than's necessary."

"No, no," said Percy coldly, "pray go on. I've great interest in and respect for Blaisdell, but, frankly, I don't like talking about him on the assumption that he needs me or anybody else to look after him. It seems officious. But, by all means, say what's on your mind!"

"He told me to go into Phil's bedroom to look up some notes. I was so flabbergasted by the look of him that I ducked in there just for form's sake. 'This is no place for little Algernon!' I thought, and I was just going to duck

out again when a classmate of his, named Atwood, came into the study. Do you know him, sir?"

"Slightly," said Percy noncommittally.

"Blaisdell jumped up when he saw him and just swore; said he was damned glad to see him—to see anyone. Atwood laughed and said 'How kind!' Then he began talking about a friend he had down from Dartmouth and how they were going to do the town to-night—Café de Bosphorous, etc. They were going first to a show at the Park, 'Trixie' in *The French Maid*. He'd come up to get Dick, and," said Monty, suddenly standing very straight and speaking stubbornly, "you can believe it or not, sir, but Dick cried out in a sort of terrible voice, 'No, no! No, no! I've quit that sort of thing! I can't! I'll be damned if I go!' I never heard anything like it except once down at school when one of the kids went clean off his head and had to be tied up. Then he looked up at Atwood the way—I don't know, the appealing way a dog would, and said it again in a whisper like, 'I'll be damned if I go!' And Atwood just smiled and said, 'Come on, you simp! Aren't you in hell now? Come on with us and get out of it!' Then he stepped up nearer, 'Shucks, Dick, stick by your own friends—we really want you!' 'Want me?' said Dick. 'Absolutely! What d'you think I'm here for?' And then he just looked round that room as if he were searching for and imploring something. For a minute he didn't make a sound and then he said very quietly, 'All right; I will.'" Monty shivered. "Gee! It was like a sick man sighing, the way he said it, as if something was gone or was going out of him, and he looked, well, he looked black, just black. He shut his notebook quite carefully and put it in his desk, and they went out. He'd absolutely forgotten that I was there; didn't pay attention to anything any more after Atwood came in."

Monty sat down rather suddenly, got out his handkerchief, and slowly and deliberately wiped his forehead.

Percy spoke with irritated perplexity. In spite of him-

self he was more coldly angry over his predicament with Monty and the plight the boy's information might put him in than he was over Dick's situation.

"I don't quite see why you have brought all this to me, Ward."

Monty picked up his hat and arose.

"I'm sorry, sir. I thought someone ought to know."

"But, my dear boy, what do you expect I can do about it? What can anyone do about it?"

"Something's *got* to be done, sir!"

"*Got* to be done?"

"Yes, sir. What about Phil?" His eyes widened and then contracted. "What about Phil getting back to-night and—finding him? Pleasant for him!"

"Well, well," said Percy desperately, "you can easily take Spenser in for the night."

"I don't know where he is or when he comes back. But he must be coming this evening." Suddenly his voice went louder and more aggressive. "And what about Dick? He's not like Atwood. He doesn't believe any more in what they'll be doing. He's been on the water wagon and—er—he's been reforming—cleaned up. I tell you, I saw the way he was to-night! Some one's got to look after him."

Percy sat down suddenly on his chair.

"Are you proposing that I should go in town and try to find him?"

"Who else is there, sir? He hasn't any friends among the upper classmen of the kind who could do it." He looked scornfully at the terrified perturbation of his host. "If I were anything except what they all think is a feather-headed freshman, I'd go myself!"

"But me!" Percy laughed mirthlessly. "Really!"

Monty's plump figure was standing rock-like in the door, his disconcerting eyes were steadily fixed on Percy's. There was something unblushing about the half-humorous, half-pitying way he noted the embarrassment and indecisive attitude.

"Of course, you're an instructor. But you're his friend, too. If you can't, and maybe I oughtn't to ask it, he's done for, that's all!"

"He's done for, anyway," snapped Percy. "What possible good do you think it would be for a man to be kept by main force from doing what in his heart he's already accepted?"

"I don't care," said Monty illogically. "If you hurry he hasn't done it yet. Why shouldn't someone stand by him just because he isn't standing by himself?" Suddenly he flushed vividly. "Of course, it isn't my funeral! I guess I've been rather fresh over it. I'll be going to see if I can find Phil."

He turned and went awkwardly through the door, and his instructor heard him pattering down the stairs.

Percy turned back fretfully to his desk, glancing toward the mantel as he did so. Nine o'clock. Nearly half the evening gone, all its momentum wasted. Was there ever anyone like Ward for combined assurance and naïveté or anything to equal the romantic schemes a boy could conjure up once he got started! He took up his pen and opened the lexicon again; now he would have to wrench his mind back upon its task, remake the earlier concentration if it were possible. He found it was not easy. Certain things Monty had said stuck in his memory; he kept rehearsing them in the tones of that stubborn voice with its half-impudent, half-appealing challenge. But there was nothing he could do! It was Blaisdell's own fault. He'd no business to have gone at it in the extreme way he had! Why hadn't he dropped around there if he'd been feeling blue or put to it? "Must I eternally be hearing about your roommate!" Spenser could never have told him that? No; that was out of the question. Still, he had felt that way——

Like a too tired swimmer, giving up, going under. That wasn't what Ward said! No; but that was the way he seemed to hear it, see it, now. Certainly there was nothing he could do. And yet, to-morrow, he might be glad, if there were nothing that could be attempted which he had left un-

done. He glanced at the clock again. Nine-twenty. It would be nearly ten before he could get in there, anyway. There was no sense in doing it. But he got up, put on his hat and coat and went out.

Some ten minutes later, as he was being driven into town, again the rebellion of both mind and temperament all but overcame him. He felt himself in a false position; he knew that once more circumstances had decided for him and the limitations of the academic mind were unpleasantly near the surface of his consciousness. Besides, he had no real expectation of finding Dick, and by no stretch of fancy could he forecast what he would do or say if he should discover him.

Yet, underneath all this he was moved, partly, by genuine compassion. His by no means alert imagination was beginning to realize what he had been hearing, beginning to picture Dick, alone, plugging at his task with no outlet for the emotional life, no sufficient recreation for tired nerves during these last days which finally had become utterly bitter, hopeless, unendurable. And he was moved to a dark wonder, too; wonder as to how a man who had fought so long and well could thus throw it all away for the red madness of a midnight hour. What were they like, these crude and reckless lads who flung their hot strife and passion into the very teeth of the prudent, sensible world, glorying in its fierce sincerity, and railing at their smug contemners? What were they like? The threads of his jealous and secretive pride stirred within him; he despised their unlicensed folly, and yet it irked him that he could not understand it.

So he arrived at the playhouse. It was small; his man might not be so difficult to locate. Somewhere in the first three or four rows he was likely to be sitting. Now that he was come to the very brink of so unconventional and unexpected action his distaste and skepticism became almost intolerable. The truly fantastic aspect of his, Percy Barrett's, hurrying into town on this errand of personal rescue

swept over him. "I hope to heaven he won't make a scene!" he thought. "It is certainly most unlikely that I shall!" But underneath he was saying, "I hope to heaven I shan't find him."

Nor did he. He rented a glass and began to scan the long, curving rows of listeners, but neither Dick nor Atwood were anywhere in sight. Then, as failure seemed certain, anxiety and compassion revived. Now that his best endeavor seemed likely to bring no dreaded necessity for action, he pursued his quest as though goodwill might be a substitute for accomplishment. He ascended to the balcony, but still the search was unrewarded. The time was slipping by and every moment counted. After a certain stage in the evening's pastime had arrived there would be nothing that he or any other human being could do about it. Clearly the boy was not in the theatre. But now he was determined on further action. What was he to do?

He drove out again to the Square, although it seemed to take much longer to retrace the distance. Finally the cab rolled down the long front of shops facing the College Yard. He noted, half-mechanically, the youthful animation of the scene, the freshmen walking up and down between Leavitt's and Foster's, men passing in and out from the soda fountains, or Sanborn's, where they played pool. There was a haunting suggestion of the big boy just out of school about it all. For the first time he noticed the youthful appearance of their backs. How immeasurable were the spaces between his world, his life, his errand this night, and their's. Rather in a maze he turned into the Yard; it was after ten by now—Spenser would be back from Pittsfield; the next move was to see him.

For, without knowing it, by some unconscious process, he had come to the conclusion, which now seemed inevitable and natural, that he must talk with Spenser even if he were not to be on hand when Dick returned. One of those parts of his mind to which he had not been paying attention had been thinking about the younger boy. If there were

anything that could be done for Blaisdell, now, his roommate would have to do it; otherwise, after this night, their present relationship would be intolerable for either.

But there was no answer when he knocked at the study door. He stooped to look through the letter slot. The inner door was open; the room, save for the fire-light, dark. He put his mouth close to the opening and called in a low voice, but there was no response. He went downstairs again into the other entry where the porter lodged, routed him out, explained that he was an instructor, and the man, who recognized him, slowly climbed the stairs with him again and opened the door with his skeleton key.

Percy passed quickly in and nervously lighted the gas, leaving the door open. It was so late now that he knew Phil must soon return. Feeling horribly like an intruder he went uncomfortably about the deserted study. Having gone thus far there was nothing to do but wait.

XVII

He sat down, facing Dick's writing table. So many more books than formerly, so comparatively orderly a desk. And he—in town, appeasing life through the wastage of it, seeking freedom in anarchy Why would not men use their brains? How could there be virtue where there was so little understanding! Well, it was worse than useless to sit there, doing nothing. He picked up, from Phil's desk, a volume of Sainte Beuve's *Causeries* and began reading.

Suddenly he heard the outer door close and, turning quickly, saw the freshman, facing him on the inner threshold of the little entry.

"Good—good evening, sir." He looked about. "Where's Dick?"

"Get off your hat and coat," Percy said quietly, "and I'll tell you. And at the same time explain my being here. There's no hurry."

Phil went into his bedroom. Something was wrong with Dick? His native irritability was stirred by it. It had not been easy to go home and adapt himself to the restraints and traditions of domestic life after the irresponsibility and freedom of his undergraduate existence. He had been bored and restless these last five days, somewhat ashamed and unhappy because of it, secretly relieved to get away. Now there was a mix-up of some sort here and an important test coming to-morrow. "Damn!" he said to himself, firmly.

Returning to the study he held out his cigarette case. "Will you smoke, sir?" It appeared to him important, and it was also somewhat soothing, to play the easy host. He had just acquired the habit of smoking, it greatly distressed his mother, it seemed an indispensable part of the social apparatus. "Dick's not sick, is he?"

"Thanks," said Percy. "With pleasure. No; he's not sick."

Phil held the match expertly. Then, when they had lighted up:

"I'm afraid something's happened to Blaisdell. Ward dropped in early this evening to see you. While he was here Atwood came in and took Blaisdell off with him for a night in town. Ward was worried by his general attitude and appearance, and came over to see me. Blaisdell's been avoiding that sort of thing of late and the morning after will be hard—Ward was concerned about you, too——"

"I rather think I can take care of myself, thank you! I've got used to his coming in late, long before this."

"But I'm afraid it may be different, this time. When a man has pulled up to the extent he has, the reaction will be correspondingly extreme. However, that doesn't matter for the moment. I've been trying to locate him but I haven't succeeded."

"You mean," incredulously, "that you went in town, sir, after him?"

"Certainly." He didn't propose to defend his action to this boy. "It was obviously worth trying. However, I didn't find him, and Ward couldn't find you, and I thought it best to wait here until one of you came in. Partly to tell you that Ward wants to put you up for the night. I will——"

"But my English test comes to-morrow, sir," broke in Phil pettishly. "Not, of course, that it would ever occur to Dick to remember that! I don't wish to bunk up on a couch at Monty's, I want a good night's sleep in my own bed. I'd rather stay here."

"Better not, Spenser. He'll come in very late and probably very drunk. There'll be a bad half hour, anyway. The test can't be put off. It's wiser to sleep out and make the best of it."

The boy lighted another cigarette, offering his case to Percy. "Thank you, no." Then as he flung the match into the grate:

"This is what I've had to put up with all the year! I suppose I can keep on. But I do despise a man who will let himself go that way!"

"It would seem to me," said Percy, "less difficult and more sensible to accept the facts instead of evaluating them and to adjust yourself accordingly. Among them is another which I haven't mentioned. He's been here, alone, for five days, gone stale on uninterrupted studying. Probably hasn't exercised, either. That and the loneliness have depressed him, which means a depressed will, too, you know. By the way, how did you get on with him that evening after our talk together?"

"Just as before. It wasn't my fault, either. I made advances enough; he wouldn't respond."

"Well, perhaps it was too late. I feared so, then. I'm sorry."

"I expected you'd say that," replied the boy sullenly.

"I mean for both of you. But I'm very sorry for him. If I were going to judge him at all it would not be by what he's done to-night, but by what, for three months, he's been trying to do. His attitude toward life, of late, has been admirable. A finer one, if you'll forgive me for saying so, than yours is, just now. I expected," he added half to himself, "that he would go down, but I hoped he would go down fighting. And perhaps he has." He turned to the boy. "You're unwise to stay here to-night, Spenser—maybe more unwise than you dream. And in your present temper, it's unkind to do it."

"What difference does it make? I'll have to come back here to-morrow. Why in the world you all take his part as you do, I don't know!"

Percy's eyes narrowed and began to take on something of their steely quality. The boy's petulance was so young, and he felt so sure of himself, that it was easy to shed the inhibitions of his official relationship and talk with natural directness to him.

"It's because we realize better than you what he's been up

against. You've never had to swim against the current. It's harder, then, to keep your nose and ears above water. He was badly hurt in his freshman year—not just his feelings, his faith. You haven't been through that. He tried again for companionship when he asked you to be his roommate. It was another unwise experiment. That's not your fault; it was an impossible situation, probably. Still, it was another failure. Then you made a close friend of one of his own classmates, and, as I think I ought now to inform you, the very man of whom we were speaking, last week."

"You don't mean it was Francis who cut him! Why, I can't conceive of his ever knowing Dick well enough, ever caring to, to have made that possible!"

"You really didn't guess it? When you knew, because of that book you've spoken of, about their former friendship?"

"Certainly I didn't! I thought they'd been sometime—oh, well, acquainted. It's impossible to think of Morland as ever having had anything in common with him."

"Yes? The sort of man Morland is to-day never would. Men change a good deal in four years, here. The friendship would be as distasteful now to one as to the other."

"You mean Dick wouldn't take up with him now—if he got the chance?"

"My guess is that Blaisdell feels something not unlike contempt for him."

"Dick!" The boy laughed. "Well, for goodness' sake, why?"

There was a pause. The time had come either to follow or abandon the course of action Percy had been debating in his mind. Finally he spoke stiffly, with self-conscious precision:

"I'm going to do an unconventional thing. Let me say that, while I know it's not well bred to do it, one has to choose, sometimes, between plain speaking and good breeding and I think the choice I am making to-night is justified. You don't perceive the kind of person Morland is, Spenser.

Hence, you overrate both the quality and the permanence of the feeling he has toward you. He's a sentimentalist, a taster of emotions. His interest in everyone is largely selfish, in what he can get from them or through them. Underneath such a man is cold, cruel, fickle. Blaisdell hasn't a quarter of his gifts, his perceptions, charm; but he's a man of deep and genuine feeling, and very loyal. To-day a man of Morland's type would be repellant to him."

Phil's face was crimson, anger struggling with his astonishment. Yet Percy thought he was not altogether taken unawares by that bald statement.

"I resent your talking down my friend to me, sir. I don't consider it fair!"

"I don't wish to turn you against a man you like, Spenser. But at this juncture of affairs, it is important for more than one man, and more than one reason, to tell you that he's not to be depended upon. You recall his last conversation with you which you quoted to me? Your saying that you felt that day that he was 'tired of you'? I, too, had a conversation with him not long before, at the Cercle. It was clear, then, that he had been interested in you, chiefly, while he was writing his 'Harvard Types.' Since then, he has been increasingly indifferent. It's hardly pleasant," he added, awkwardly, "for me to be making this sort of remarks. But to-night, if ever, you ought to be helped to face the facts. I know that's not easy."

"I think, sir, I face some of the facts about Dick more than you do. I'm not trying to lie to myself about him!"

"I know you're not. But you don't see all of the facts. Morland isn't your friend and your association with him has blinded you to this other man who could have been—I sincerely believe wanted to be, too. I'm only saying this for the one reason that, when he comes back, you'll give him, as you have Morland, the benefit of the doubt and a fair chance."

The boy looked at him with hard impassiveness of speech and manner.

"I've no doubt, sir, you've done what you think's best. But I'm not going to listen to tales about my friend when he isn't here to meet them. He's never gone back on me yet, which is more than you can say about my roommate."

Percy got up at that.

"Very well, Spenser. I respect the motive which makes you resent what I've been saying. I can't help but wish that you might stop feeling your feelings in this situation and quietly put your mind on it. However, I presume it isn't reasonable to expect that. It was distasteful to me to speak so frankly, yet what I have said I believe was both kind and just. Please remember that you can't be the one unless you are also the other. There's no use, evidently, in my staying here any longer, it will be easier for you both to have me out of the way. But I think I hear Ward coming for you now."

There was a step outside the entry. He looked at his watch and knew it could not be Blaisdell, for it was only half past eleven. But Phil recognized that footfall. He stood, very white, looking at the door. Then Dick walked in.

Percy's eyes narrowed with concentrated scrutiny. Blaisdell's face was gray, the lines drawn deep with weariness. His whole bearing was unusual and remote like one absorbed in some inward dream. Percy had a lightning-like perception of qualities or attitudes in others which were temperamentally distasteful or mentally incomprehensible to him; it was in full play now. "He's not drunk, nor has been; there's no odor on his breath." Then his eyes wavered a moment. "I believe he's had another one of those mystical experiences like the one he hinted at that first night." He was less anxious, also less interested and sympathetic now.

Dick sat down slowly in his desk-chair, one arm falling wearily onto the table. His face changed when he caught sight of Barrett, first with surprise, then with a dawning question in the eyes and a stiffening of the muscles. His eyelid flickered nervously.

"Good evening, sir." His voice dragged, but it was clear and quiet. "You and Phil having a conference?"

He turned and looked at the boy with the same questioning scrutiny. There was an embarrassed silence. Then his gaze returned to Percy, his eyes were intelligent and steady, but something defensive had crept into his manner.

"Why, yes and no," said Percy finally. "No conference in any formal or important sense. But we were," with rather an attempt at lightness, "speaking in a casual and friendly fashion, about you."

Dick looked coldly at Phil.

"Well," he said, "what's the big idea? I don't get it."

"We were both worried about you," interrupted Percy evenly. With Dick's advent every particle of "the young instructor" had returned to his manner. He felt himself in a wretchedly false position. Something that had been hectic, unreal, in the last half hour's conversation, seemed to have revealed itself the moment Dick entered the room. "The fact is Ward was up here and saw you go out with Atwood and didn't quite like your looks and came over and told me about it. I thought perhaps, I got from him, at least, the impression that, well, that possibly, in an impulsive moment, you were going in town to—to do things you might regret afterward. I'm afraid this all sounds very meddlesome," he went on with some dignity, "but I went in town after you."

"After me!"

"Ward thought you'd gone to the *Tremont*," Percy continued steadily. "I couldn't find you there and returned here on the assumption that, in doing so, I might be of possible service, well—to both of you. It's quite evident no service is needed. I haven't any apology to offer for wanting to give it but I am sorry that I shouldn't have kept to my own interpretation of what Ward told me rather than his. Well, no, that's not quite accurate, I was unduly concerned myself. I should have known there was no need of it. It was officious to—to spend an evening looking after you. It was not meant to be so. I'll be getting back, now," rising, "to my own rooms."

Dick got onto his feet.

"I went in to a show at the *Tremont*. There was a mixup about the seats so we all went round to the *Howard*. When the rest started to bust loose afterward, I came home. What of it?"

"Why, nothing," said Percy evenly. "Except that your friends—if you will permit me to call myself one of them—are glad——" He looked very straightly at the boy. "Good-night, Blaisdell."

Dick took a step forward; he had flushed under that quiet scrutiny. There was another dignity of his own with which he met the older man's.

"Well, you see, sir, I don't need to be helped to bed, after all. But what you did was—was mighty handsome. I guess I resent it some, but I've—I've no real right to." He checked himself. "Good-night, sir."

He shut the door on Percy's retreating back and returned to the study. Phil was sitting, in the shadow of the lamplight, on the window-sill; he walked over to him.

"I reckon the time has come for you and me to have an understanding," he said. "What are you and Ward trying to run here—a Rescue Mission?"

Phil's eyes were fixed on the cushions.

"I've only been back from home less than an hour. I had nothing to do with it. Dr. Barrett was here when I came in. So far as I can make out it's he who's been trying to play nurse-girl to both of us." He looked up inscrutably. "He was trying to set me against Morland."

"He's not that kind," said Dick suddenly. "Not the pious sort, either; he's not even religious at all."

"Well, I always supposed before that he had sense enough to mind his own business instead of helping the universe mind it's. He made a mistake—butting in. I haven't any use for these missionary profs. Better go into preaching if they're so bent on reforming other people. I noticed he got your goat, all right."

"That's so. Just the same, he's been a good friend of

mine—yours, too. That's why I let him see, when he left, that I knew he meant to be friendly and on the level with us. It does get me why he did it! If it had been old Bartlett, the English Lit. instructor, I'd understand it. Last of a long line of maiden aunts, I'll call him. But Barrett's not that sort, that's why I'm not going to hear you curse him out. He's got an—an intellectual conscience and you'll find that these profs who drip with piety are usually mighty dry of learning. What—what did he say to you about Morland?"

"He as good as told me that he was a rotter and—and that I couldn't depend on him."

Dick spoke with some difficulty.

"I rather guess men of Barrett's kind don't go round saying that sort of thing unless they know what they're talking about. I used to like Morland—made more of an ass of myself over him than you have. It didn't pay, either. Understand, I'm not sore with you for having chosen him, instead of me, for a friend. But I can tell you one thing, you'll be lucky if you get through with Morland now. He chucked me, all right." Then he added, slowly: "I'd not like to see that happen to you, and that's the truth, Phil."

The boy walked across the room, took up the Homer lying on his desk, and threw it contemptuously into the lower drawer.

"What's all that stuff but lies!" he cried. "Children's lies! There are no heroes; there isn't any romance in the world, nor any men like that. They are all alike. I knew it was true. But I wasn't going to let Dr. Barrett see it. I haven't got a real friend anywhere!"

"As far as I can make out from what's been happening up here to-night," said Dick slowly, "Ward's shown himself your friend. And Barrett, too," he added doggedly.

"But I don't want that sort of thing," said the boy miserably. "I'm no teachers' pet! They're not in our world, and we're not in theirs. What's the use pretending over it!"

"A man does want a pal," said Dick quietly. "I guess everyone knows that."

There was antoher pause. Finally, Phil spoke, his voice still hard, but the words came jerkily.

"You said the time had come for us to have an understanding. I agree to that. I meant to take the first step. Tried to last Thursday night, sort of. I meant to do it again to-night, and I'm going to. I'm going to tell you first that I know I've made a fool of myself, chasing after Morland. I've known it for weeks. But I wouldn't see it. I —I didn't dare to. He's—he's tired of me. But he isn't going to get the chance to tell me so! I'm not going to trouble him much hereafter! And I'm sorry about the way I've acted here, because of him."

Dick's face was a study.

"That's all right," he said slowly. "It was a great deal more my fault, at first, than yours—that's certain. I'll say something else, now, since you've spoken this way. You hit me pretty hard that morning, three months ago, when I tried to apologize for our fight over the freshman dinner. Told me to keep my hands off you! That's damn near an insult. I've taken mighty good care not to offer any handshakes since."

Phil got off the window seat. Dick was looking at him with a hard steadiness. The boy stood very straight, his face quivering, like a colt's, his eyes bright with unshed tears. With sudden impulsiveness Dick walked up to him. He put his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"You don't mind that now, Phil?"

The boy's lips trembled, his knees, too; only his eyes answered. Dick moved away from him; then he spoke:

"I want to be friends, Dick. When Dr. Barrett told me to-night where you'd gone I did think you'd smashed again. I bluffed it out first with him, blaming you so as not to have to blame myself. But I knew then that—that I cared. I've been thinking a lot since I've been home. I didn't enjoy being there. I knew you'd kept out of my way lately, and let me have the room to myself. I knew you'd been pulling up, and that I hadn't paid any attention to it. I meant to come back and make it up with you—provided you wanted it. Then,

finding Dr. Barrett here, and his—his defense of you got me sore and bitter again. He certainly thought you were a goner, and it seemed as if it were too late and that nothing, nothing had been fair this year."

"Well," said Dick, half resentfully, "you made it mighty clear, between you, that you were amazed at seeing me come in sober."

"It was more happiness than amazement, Dick."

"All right. I'm ready to believe that." He took a turn about the room. "Say, you've got a test to-morrow, haven't you? It's pretty near to-morrow now! We'd better turn in."

"I don't care about the exam. I'll pass it, anyway. I'd rather talk. It doesn't make any difference to me, to-night, whether I get A or B in it. I haven't any right to be asking for confidences. Except," with a faint return of the old pride and stubbornness, "if we're going to get on together it can't be any big brother—little boy affair. I guess I feel about you the way you said any man would. I want a pal, someone I can talk to because he talks to me. A lot of things that never troubled me at school, beliefs and—and impulses I'd like to get outside of myself with someone else that I liked and trusted."

"Think you're sure about the 'trust'?" said Dick.

"I guess if you don't see it now, there's no use my saying it."

"You mean you want to hear about—about what really happened to-night?"

"I wish I could understand it, Dick. I know Dr. Barrett couldn't have. I'd try to. Provided you trust me, too."

Blaisdell sat down on the window seat. As he spoke he gazed out through the blank window-panes. Below were the occasional lamps of the Square, dimly seen from the lighted room; beyond that, the dark. The dormitory was subdued to utter stillness. Phil, in the shadows of the other end of the window seat, listened, sensitive, alert, sore-hearted, still, but open-minded.

"We went to a cheap show. When it came right down to it, I couldn't stick it. That's about all there is to it."

"You'd have said as much as that to Dr. Barrett if he'd asked you, Dick. I know darn well, because I've been living with you here, that you've—you've got hold of something that helps you. I'm not curious about it, if you don't want to tell. But I do want to know if religion's real! What I brought up here isn't. Hasn't been ever since I've been in college. You've got something you think is."

"I sure have. It's—it's hard to talk about. Doesn't seem right and natural to keep it to myself, doesn't seem decent to tell it, either."

"The trouble with me is, Dick, that I don't know where I stand. I know what Mother lives by is—is everything to her. But it just irritates me when she tries to put it over on me, hand it out, sort of, on a platter. I can't, I won't take it that way. And all the time I feel as if I'd lost something and couldn't be happy till I'd found it again. And I don't know where to look. I—I thought you did, Dick."

Dick turned and looked at him.

"Phil, I don't know how to talk about it. But I'll tell you just—just so far as I can. I went in town with the boys meaning to go on a tear. I thought I couldn't fight any longer, that it wasn't any use. I was just wild when I first saw the show at the *Howard;* the lights, the music, the girls, the let-go of it."

A tremor ran through Phil's immobile figure, like a subterranean wave whose sound was stifled.

"I understand that, all right."

"Then I began to see it differently. I didn't want to; I couldn't understand why. But it was the grease and the paint and the powder and the dirt I was looking at. I was just torn in two inside," he added in a low voice. "Seemed as if I could feel the tearing inside of me."

He stopped for a moment, breathing heavily. He was looking, again, with averted face, through the window-panes. Phil heard the sifting of the crumbling ashes in the grate.

"Toward the end, it wasn't real; I wasn't there any more —only seeing it from some place far off. We were going to the *Reynolds* for supper. Atwood had phoned some girls

to meet us; going up to their flat afterward. I thought I was caught; I'd gone with them knowing it was for that sort of thing. Now I knew how I hated it. But it was too late, I couldn't break away. I was ashamed of backing out then, and leaving the boys. And then I saw——"

'You *saw* something?" There was the suffering of hopeless incredulity in Phil's voice.

"I mean what had happened. I was someone else. I was another man. Phil, I've been thinking all these weeks that the fight was hopeless, useless. But all the while I kept on fighting *and being changed* and not knowing it. Some one was helping by not letting me give up. We were going down Harrison Avenue. Something inside of me said, 'Get help! You know, now. Ask and get.' Before I said 'I will,' the moment I meant to say it, I was answered."

"Dick," broke from the boy, "I'm outside of it. I don't want to be, but I can't help it. I don't want to be fooled! How can you be so sure?"

"Because it happened, Phil. It was as though I was turned upside down in some great place, or—or kingdom within. Everything that had been trying again, to-night, to get back again on top, just sank, sank way down to the bottom. It ceased, disappeared. Something else that had been way down deep rose up, rose up—nothing could stop it now—and took command." Once more he turned and looked at his roommate. "No power on earth could have taken me to the *Reynolds* after that," he said, with a new inflection. "I stopped the boys. 'What's up?' said Bob. 'I'm not going any further, I can't.' 'Can't?' said Atwood. 'You're never going to back out now!' 'I'm not backing out, I loathe it. I can't do it.' I turned around and ran for a car. After I started running I just raced for it. I didn't notice what car it was. It landed me out in Brighton and I walked over here."

"Dick, if it is so real, why can't you give it to some one else?"

"I guess you can't ever do that with things that are real,

Phil. I guess every man has to get them for himself. Anyway, the fight's won." He got up and put his hand again on Phil's shoulder. "I'm all in. We've got to get to bed. But I have told you, haven't I?"

* * * *

So he was back at last in his tidy, colorless study, Mistral's *Mireio* still lay open on his desk, his careful notes, his pen, his references, just as he had left them, all were there. What an utter fool he had made of himself by letting his feelings get the better of his judgment! Established a false relationship with both these boys that he might never be able to overcome, and all to no purpose. Absolutely unnecessary. Hadn't he always known that no man who was worth anything could be carried through college in a perambulator! That no man who was worth anything would either want or permit it! If he had only kept to his natural relationship as a teacher!

He looked at his books; ancient syntax, obsolete words, quaint idioms, pale reflections in an archaic literature of a vanished society. Yes, here was where he lived, among old voices, vanished faces, other minds. How great the distance, not spanned by worlds, between this room and Mathews Hall that night. Always his mind against the world, always standing off from it, estimating, analyzing, criticizing, never accepting, always outside. Cleavage! Cleavage between experience and that watchful mind; cleavage between himself and the world. His eyes traveled about the quiet, secure, lonely room. Blaisdell was at home in the Universe, he had gotten inside. "But then," said Percy to himself, "he isn't really inside. He can't be. Whether a man lives by what he believes is real, or whether a man, who can't believe, lives by it as though it were real, what difference is there? There's no real difference, is there? It must be true that there can't be?"

XVIII

THE Mid-Years were over! The old round of recitations and lectures was taken up once more, and a sense of buoyant cheerfulness pervaded dormitory and Yard. The second term, the last semester of Dick's college life, was well under way.

He had come through much as he expected. His French showed a C for the half year. Nearly an entire evening had Percy wrestled over the grading of the semester's endeavor. He could not make Dick's evident educational progress and his imperfect grasp of vocabulary and syntax coincide. "He's learned more in the course than he knows about it," he thought irritably. He was so distrustful lest his knowledge of Blaisdell's attainment of character should influence his judgment as to his acquisition of learning that even the C that he finally awarded troubled him. "Doc. Barrett's handed me the gentleman's grade, and now he suspects me for it," said Dick to Phil. "Queer duck, isn't he?"

In his Biology, a course that had particularly interested him, he "pulled" a B, but the other marks were all either D's or E's; and he knew that soon and somewhere the blow must fall. It was really a relief, therefore, when finally a card came from the Recorder, "directing" him to call next morning at the office. "Got my summons, Phil!" he called out one afternoon. "I'm up for the haul-over at nine o'clock to-morrow morning." On the whole, he was glad he was going to see the Dean and have his fate settled one way or the other. There had been an amazing change in him, in his attitude toward life, understanding of self, even in his areas and modes of expression, since that unforgettable evening in the study. Neither he nor Phil made many direct references to it, and little demonstration passed between them. But

while they had quickly withdrawn from that unfamiliar world of ardent expression and emotion, it had left its indelible marks. Not often, now, did Phil indulge in romantic exploitations of either grief or ecstasy; the very remembrance of his intolerant sentimentalisms made his slender figure quiver with protest and disgust. And Dick began to develop a quite remarkable combination of character and executive ability. His mind was sturdy, not very imaginative, quick to seize concrete information and to perceive its uses. When it came to insights into character they were amazingly acute, absolute, never very much reasoned out. And never again would he doubt his inward light, distrust its guidance. It was that certainty of a directing Presence, so self-verifying to him, so impossible to explain or transmit, which alternately attracted and exasperated the younger boy.

"But *how* can you be so sure?" he asked one day.

"Can't tell you, but there it is," Dick replied. "Try it and you'll find out. You high-brows are always hanging your clothes on the hickory limb, but you don't go near the water! Believe in it and you'll understand."

"But the thing a man comes to college for is to analyze and test what he believes."

"You got that out of Doc. Barrett. You're just alike! You both want to know all about it first, prove what it is before you decide to try. As if you didn't have to try in order to prove! Lord! I am sick of class rooms! Always scrapping over definitions and phrases. That's not where you get reality, but where you get away from it. Like living in a vacuum!"

"But," Phil said impatiently, "I know it's real, but I'm not sure I can accept your explanation of it."

"Barrett and his sort don't know it's real. Fine chap, too. But he's tied up to an idea and fighting for it against life. You can bet I'm not going to fight against life—I'm going to fight with it."

"It's not reasoning God out of life to try to define what you mean by him!" Phil expostulated.

"All I say is, *get* it first and explain afterward. Saying, 'Of course, it's something, but it isn't what you say it is,' doesn't cut any ice with me. I tell you a lot of this high-brow talk's gone bad! It's not in word-scraps you'll find reality unless you take it there with you. You'll find it in life, and a lot of these profs are profs because they've backed out of life! They'll answer any question except, 'What are you going to do about it?' Always getting off on side issues."

"Well, I don't see how any man believes in a thing he can't understand."

"Get it first and explain afterward!" Dick repeated. "I don't care how it's explained, then. One thing I know, that 'whereas I was blind, now I see.' What more d'you want? Let that satisfy you."

Yes; ethical insight and volitional energy he had in amazing measure, but his esthetic attitudes were Phil's perpetual despair. "Sure, old man, rip 'em down!" he said one day, when Phil intimated weariness with the crimson flannel banners, flaring posters, and photographs that covered the wall. "What are you going to put in place of 'em?"

"Nothing," said Phil. "Leave the walls bare so the room will seem high and quiet."

The next day Dick surveyed the stripped study. "'High and quiet!' It looks like 'over the hills to the poorhouse' to me! But if you want it, kid, I don't care a darn!" Whereupon Phil, seing him so unconsciously unhappy over it, sulkily put some of them back.

And then there was Dick's sense of humor—his stories! Phil was genuinely disturbed and puzzled here. Dick came in one day, his face in a broad grin. "Got a corker, just now, from Reggie. Some poor simp trying to pass a Civil Service exam—two questions to answer: Where do you live and where were you born? Reply: I was born at Bridgeport and all along the coast of Maine." He laughed loudly; then, at Phil's faint and embarrassed rejoinder: "Loosen up! Why don't you laugh?" "I don't think it's very funny," said Phil. "I'd call it raw." "Oh," said Dick, "unbend!

Make your mouth flexible! You go round saying 'papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes and prisms' so as to keep your moral shape." "I'll bet you don't know where that phrase comes from," said Phil irritatedly. "Heard Monty use it," said Dick. "I don't believe he does, either. It's from *Little Dorrit*." "Is it?" replied Dick indifferently. "Well, it's funny, anyway." Unclean speech, dirty stories, filled Dick with rage, but at anything broadly comic, frankly Rabelaisian, if it had point or humor, he would laugh uproariously. There was a racy robustness in his wit, a hearty naturalism in his humor which no mock modesty, no esthetic sensitiveness either deterred or altered.

Then, too, there was the endless argument over grades. "Why worry about your marks, Dick? We don't come here for that. You've learned more about life and yourself, and done more this last half-year than you ever have in your whole life before. Can't you see that you're getting what college is for! Let the marks slide." "That's all right," Dick would rejoin, "but I don't want to stay on probation all the rest of the year, do I? And don't I want my degree? A precious lot I'd be getting out of college if I lost that!" "It's nothing but a parchment," said Phil. "Tell that to my dad," Dick replied grimly. "You go chase yourself! Marks are important matters. If you knew the Dean's office as well as I do, you wouldn't have much doubt about that!"

But it was the pleasant prick of these differences which made their comradeship vigorous. As Monty, who had kept himself well acquainted with the sequence of events at Mathews Hall, remarked: "Their's was a path, though thorny, bright!" Dick was childlike in his unself-consciousness; the past was past, he had put it away, behind him. Phil could not understand that quick resiliency, the return to the natural expansiveness of youth. He often marvelled over that as well as over his simplicity of outlook, his disconcerting if reassuring frankness. But sometimes Dick would drop back into the somber mood. "Remember that man

Joubert that Doc. was reading from to the class the other day? His *Pensees*? One of 'em got me: 'Illusion is an integral part of reality.' That doesn't mean *delusion,* does it?" "No," said Phil decidedly. "I knew darn well it didn't. I'm afraid some realities are never going to be quite the same again to me. Got to pay something for your folly." But on the whole he lived in the present and the future. And the path from impulse to action was so short with him. He thought, he felt, he did something! Phil, complex, self-conscious, introspective, always troubled by decisions, watched him with mingled perplexity and envious despair. And, to Dick, Phil was a sort of gift-child, an infant prodigy. "You're a wonder!" he would say wistfully. "I'll be darned if I know how so many reasons and objections and ideas occur to you. I'd like to have a think-box like yours!" But, underneath the irritability, the quick retort and stubborn arguing of the younger lad, his sensitive spirit, his need of love and jealous guarding of its expression and purity—these made Dick infinitely gentle toward him.

And so, with the inimitable frankness, the unconscious security of natural and self-respecting boys, they lived their daily routine in one another's presence. And there were many hours when work was done and before sleep seemed necessary, when they sat before the fire, Dick, shrewd and humorous, Phil, questioning, wistful, talking over the events of their college world, exploring with an instinctive insight, a sort of preternatural acuteness, the shames and heroisms of the human heart. Dick would pull away at his pipe on these occasions; Phil, keen and resolute, a taut bundle of nervous energy and inward fire, would gesticulate and pronounce. But his absolutism was waning even as Dick's simple strengths and quiet assurances were coming more and more to the front. The two were taking their natural places together, the older man sober, sensible in his estimates, his moderation shot through from time to time by flashes of intuition, mystical certainties; the younger eager, challenging,

often protesting, yet, as the days went on, more often listening. But for all the cheerful matter-of-factness that marked these hours, no human being could have told what they meant to Dick. Over the dry and thirsty river bed of his parched spirit the blessed waters had returned. His whole life was made fruitful, pacified by that warm and true companionship.

He waked early on the morning of the official interview. He had an illimitable capacity for sleep, and on the mornings of his nine o'clocks usually ran across the Square to bolt some cereal and gulp a cup of coffee at the lunch-counter before going breathless into class. But this morning, perhaps because the official postcard was on his mind, he was up early, and found himself leaving Memorial at twenty minutes of nine, just as the old bell on Harvard Hall began a steady and persistent ringing. "There goes *'La belle dame sans merci,'*" he ruminated cheerfully. "Heard the old lady every morning for four years now. Expect next year I'll miss her. I suppose it's for chapel." He knew vaguely that the University maintained morning prayers; now and then he had seen men slipping in through the doors of Appleton as he passed by, but he had never reflected as to why or for just what they went. Chapel and church in general he regarded with a calm and benevolent indifference, they belonged to middle-aged people, there was no conscious need in his life to which they ministered, they appeared to be chiefly places for preaching or being preached at, both of which things he instinctively avoided. Religion, if you separated it from the rest of you and thought about it as "religion," was something very personal, jealously guarded; the last thing you did was to talk about it or try to "sell" it to anyone; it was a mixture of moral healthiness and an inward, indefinable companionship and power. You got it by contagion, not conviction; you certainly weren't argued into it and you resented being exhorted about it. What "they," the church people, meant by it he didn't know—something obvious and external and repressive, he imagined. Anyway, it didn't

interest him. But this morning he had fifteen minutes on his hands before the appointment. The old bell pealed and pealed. He believed he'd go in.

He slipped through the faculty door and seated himself half-way down the long and narrow auditorium. The room, for all its shabbiness, was pleasantly bright and still, the morning sun poured softly through the colored windows. Not many men were there, but he was surprised, he didn't know why, at their representative character, the normal and attractive appearance of them all. Along with some whose temperamental acceptance of conformity would naturally bring them, were others whom he knew of as in the several clubs; football men, fellows identified with various social, dramatic, literary activities. They dropped in one by one, chose some convenient seat, bowed their heads for a moment on the pew in front, and then sat up looking at ease and unconsciously at home. And next to the representative character of the group was its quietness. The restless college life composed and focussed here; an atmosphere of repose and simplicity pervaded the long room. Up near the chancel were several faculty men, and in front of them all the President. He looked curiously at that remote figure, with whom few undergraduates in those days had personal contacts; the still and immense dignity, the patrician face, graven into immutable lines of undeviating purpose, high and proud reserve. Just after Dick entered the Dean came in by the opposite door, taking one of the wall seats. Dick shifted his position in order to place another boy between him and the line of the Dean's vision. "It would be a joke," he thought, "if he saw me in here for the first time this morning!" His boyish spirit did not mean to give the disciplinary officer any reason to suppose that he had come in on the chance that he might be observed.

The brief service was ended almost before it had begun. Dick was not overly impressed by the few words of direct and concrete address. It had an air of conscious intellectual liberalism, which, admirable enough in itself, seemed

not perfectly in keeping there, although he could not have said why. But one thing took hold of him powerfully: the preacher's petitions were concluded by the Lord's Prayer, in which all the congregation of bowed youths joined. It was the saying of that prayer, the subdued voices, the devout articulation, which shook the senior. Dick humbly repeated the ancient words, his quick heart touched to humility and awe. Passing slowly through the main, south doors, still pondering, he ran into Monty Ward; they had both come out into the vestibule together.

"Hello, Monty!" he said. "What! Were you in chapel? I wouldn't entirely expect to find you at prayers."

"Feeling is entirely mutual," said Monty. "Entirely mutual. I nearly threw a fit myself when I saw you!"

"Say," said Dick thoughtfully, as they walked toward University together, "if you don't mind, I wish you'd tell me why you go. I never came within a hundred miles of even thinking about chapel when I was a freshman—in fact, this morning is the first time I was ever there."

"Oh," said Monty, with elaborate indifference, "I don't know—lots of reasons! I got terribly fed up with it at school. The sound of that droning organ at St. Andrews and the preacher's now-you-be-good-little-boy voice used to just about put me on the blink. Made me long to be one roaring, blasphemous wonder, and take the long greased slide right down to hell! But I went once in a while here the first half year because—well, because I told the folks I would. Then I began to like it. This isn't 'church,' you know! They don't hand it out to you here on a platter. It isn't getty-up and sitty-down and say 'amen' like your mouth was full of hot potatoes, and you had your best 'front' and your new breast-pin on. Oh, I don't know, it's just natural. There probably isn't much in it," he went on, with careful cynicism, "but it pleases the folks and gets me up in the morning. Lord!" he added hastily, "I don't go every day, you know."

They had come to where their ways would part.

"Well," said Dick, "I've got nine o'clocks three mornings this term; I believe on some of those days I'll drop in."

As Dick turned to enter University, Monty spoke up a little shyly.

"Going to be presented to His Majesty? Don't worry and get a wrinkle!" He extended a chubby fist. "And, noble earl, receive my hand."

"Thanks," laughed Dick. "I'll pull through somehow."

So he went up the high granite steps, passed through that inner door marked "4," and seated himself on the long settee outside the rail in the Recorder's Office to await his turn. He was not unfamiliar with the Dean of Harvard; indeed, the whole college was well acquainted with that figure; a curious attitude of admiration and respect struggling with and triumphing over the traditional hostility of the student mind toward its disciplinary officer. It was frankly agreed that the Dean was just; fairness he was admitted to possess. His long, loosely knit figure, the lined, sensitive, kindly face, the winning simplicity and frankness of the whimsical smile, these made a picture for which the Yard felt both affection and pride. They knew the capacity for moral indignation which that frail frame could cover, but to the foreground in their consciousness lay the fact that the Dean was a man who met you man fashion, a man of extraordinary patience and kindness, and yet on occasion as just and as inexorable as fate.

There were half a dozen boys sitting side by side, taciturn, unresponsive, in uncomfortable silence, who had arrived before him. He would have some time to wait. His mind, as the minutes went by, began revolving many things which the occasion brought to consciousness. He was sufficiently anxious over the outcome of this interview, yet he realized, as he waited on that long settee, that life was being enriched of late with new and ever-deepening values which no Dean could either give or take away. He was seing so many things in college which hitherto had escaped his eyes. "What she said was true," he thought. "I've always found

in these four years just what I was looking for." His own crude ambitions and then his deviating course of conduct had disclosed whatever there was of snobbishness and vice in this community of youth about him. But now when he himself was free from dubious practices and poor ambitions—his own life open, honorable and sincere—why, all around him the hearty, joyous life of the place seemed fairly thrust upon him.

Most of all, it was surprising that it should have taken him so long to find out that Harvard was really an amazingly friendly institution; yet here again it was his own fault that he had not discovered it before. Rumor, which percolates with startling speed and particularity in young men's communities, had already spread it among his class mates that Blaisdell had sworn off, that he was really on the water wagon at last, had pulled back into the old place, and immediately he found himself in a new and more attractive atmosphere. For it was characteristic of these lads that now, even as before, they accepted him at his face value. "In this sort of a place it's what you are that counts," he thought. With ruthless justice, Blaisdell, the lazy and dissipated senior, was on the whole rated and treated as such. The very idea of offering advice or preachment to him on his courses would have been fantastic to these boys, but the by no means ineffective weapon of a taciturn and adverse public opinion they had unconsciously but consistently employed. But now he was finding his college a very likeable and cordial place. The men cared little or nothing as to his academic standing; the winning or losing of his degree would not affect their estimate of him now. But, without knowing it, they were true to the persistent Puritanism of the college; their sense of the value of character, as judged, of course, by their own, not their elders' standards, was paramount. Men who were liars were despised; the few men who consorted with loose women were to the powerful wholesome stream of the college life, taboo. The occasional or temperate drinker was accepted on the ground that it was no

one else's business as to how a man regulated his conduct here; but the drunkard was passed by as an unmanly and distasteful figure.

So Dick, returned to himself, was finding that men who apparently had never before seen him in the Yard were flinging out a brief "good-morning" as they passed, and that other men who had long since appeared to have forgotten his very existence were dropping in occasionally at the Mathews room, or chatting sociably with him as they waited their turn to weigh their lithe and gleaming bodies after using the crowded gymnasium baths. And Dick was happy, therefore, for all his anxiety over his degree. Of course, Phil was partly right; in a sense he felt that at the very end he was getting something out of Harvard College, even the most important thing the undergraduate can get—the respect and liking of his peers, the power to interpret and respond to the life of his own generation. So he was armed for those keen and searching eyes, that quiet voice whose questions always seemed to pierce the joints of the youthful armor. Whatever might be asked of him now he knew he could answer freely and unafraid.

Finally the attendant looked out from the other room and called his name, and he entered the inner office. The long, loose figure in the chair at the desk, his head outlined in the bright light of the window, swung round to greet him as he sat down. The Dean was fumbling with his glasses; finally he fixed them well down on his nose, glanced over them at Dick in a half-quizzical, half-apologetic way, and then said in a mild and hurried voice:

"Er—good-morning, Mr. Blaisdell. I've sent for you to talk with you about your grades. Are you aware of how your work is going?"

"Yes, sir," said Dick steadily. "I know what my Mid-Year marks were. I guess I know just about where I stand."

"Then you probably expected to be kept on probation?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Ah! And you realize that you are in grave danger of losing your degree?"

Dick swallowed hard.

"Yes, sir."

Meanwhile the Dean's questioning eyes, a sort of eager wistfulness in them, were studying the lad, looking for such revelations and answers, other than those of speech, which his appearance might provide. Blaisdell looked so much younger than he had of late; the somber, brooding look had all but disappeared; there was cheerful serenity in the face, his eyes were clear and steady, his speech frank and, though laconic, direct. "I think," the Dean said inwardly, "the boy's beginning to find himself."

"I see you had a half course in Biology which finished at the Mid-Years. You did very well in that. What are you electing in place of it?"

"I've signed up for some advanced chemistry, sir. I had the elementary work freshman year."

"That will be a hard semester's work," said the Dean tentatively. "Long laboratory hours."

"Yes, sir; I know it."

"You've some definite reason for taking it? What are you going to do next year?"

"I don't know as yet—for certain."

"Tell me why your work went so badly in the first semester," continued the watchful figure in the chair.

"Mostly because in the first part of it I didn't work, sir. I guess it was a clear case at first of—indifference and neglect."

"At first? When did you begin to try to pull it up?"

"About two months and a half to three months before exams."

The Dean referred to a great open ledger by his side.

"You have a B-, a C, a D, and two E's," he remarked. "I should think you could have done better than that with two months' start."

There fell a little pause. Then—

"Yes, sir."

"Well," insisted the Dean; "tell me, why was it?"

Dick's foot moved uneasily along the floor. "I'm perfectly willing to tell you, sir," he said, "but you understand I'm not trying to beg off or make excuses."

"Oh, yes, I understand," said the Dean.

"I was trying to do two things at once," said Dick. "That was the trouble. I had to fight appetite and laziness at the same time. I never had a lazy body, but I didn't realize until I got at it that there is such a thing as a lazy mind. I don't think lots of fellows do. But my mind was the most indolent thing I ever dreamed of. It took pretty near all my days and all my pluck to tackle my—habits. I just had the fag ends of my time and the left-over of my energy to give to the lessons. Dr. Barrett was awfully white, and he helped me with the French, evenings, and the Biology I just naturally took to, and it came easy. But as for the others, I knew perfectly well before I went into the exams that I'd flunk them—or as good as flunk them."

"What was it," said the Dean. "Drink?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you've got that behind you?"

"That's finished."

"It would seem, then, that you have done something with the semester's work?"

"Yes, sir; of course, I could have done better, though."

Then he saw the famous and whimsical smile. The Dean closed his great ledger and turned his chair so that he was directly facing the other. He looked keenly into Dick's eyes.

"Are you able to assure me that you will put your academic duties first, and do your very best with your work from now on to Commencement?"

Dick returned his gaze gravely and fearlessly. As his eyes met those of the older man he smiled a little in turn.

"I'm doing that now, sir."

"Thank you for telling me," said the Dean. "I think I understand the situation. The first thing to do is to see if

we can get you make-up examinations in those two courses which you have failed to pass. I don't know that your instructors will think it wise to do this for you, but I will ask them. Can you afford some tutoring?"

"Yes, sir, I can. I'm not spending much money now."

"Very well," said the Dean. "Those failures must be cleared up, and it is essential that you pass all the spring hour examinations—of course, you understand that. You'll take no cuts from now until these examinations, except with the permission of this office, secured in advance." He rose and held out his hand. "I am sorry, Mr. Blaisdell, but I shall have to keep you on probation. But if you work hard I think you will make your degree. If you only just make it, but make it honorably, the college will be glad to give it to you. That's all. Good day."

Dick bounded up the stairs of Mathews and into the study. "Phil," he called out, "I'm safe! I've got to work like the devil, but I'm going to make my degree. Going home now, Friday night, to see the folks and talk about next year. Back on the midnight, Sunday. And then, my boy," he added, looking joyously at the freshman, "then I'm going to call again upon a certain girl!"

"Roxbury way?"

"You bet, Phil!"

"Dick—say—you, you don't really know her very well, do you?"

"Well enough to be in love with her. I'll call that some knowing!"

"How do you know that you're—that you're going to be in love with her, now? You don't mind my asking?"

"You know I don't. What are you driving at?"

"Oh, nothing, really. Only it's so long since you've seen her. There's a lot of water passed under the bridge since last autumn——"

"Now, don't squeal! What is it? You've got something on that all-fired mind."

Phil flushed sensitively.

"You won't be hurt if I say it?"

"No."

"Well, I only met her once, but I've been thinking a good deal about that afternoon in the light of—of what's happened since. She's, I think she's chiefly a romantic sort of person."

Dick laughed heartily. "Sure, kid, all girls are romantic—and some freshmen."

"Well, I'm not being romantic just now; quite the reverse. To come right out with it, I think she's been more interested in you as—as a case than in you as you. And," he concluded, his head up, "I resent it."

Dick smiled happily at him.

"You're a good sort, Phil, but don't you worry. Believe me, when I see her again she won't regard me as a 'case' long."

"All right," said Phil stubbornly, "but don't you forget that 'love is blind.' I only hope she knows whom she's got the chance of getting. I think she's a good deal like her brother."

A dangerous light came into Dick's eyes then. "I guess you'd better explain that, Phil."

"I mean that she's awfully clever and beautiful, and I know she's fine and high—of course, I know all that; you've only got to look at her to see that. But it's the same restlessness and liking to handle people. She twisted me right round her finger!"

"Aha! That's what's the trouble with you!" laughed Dick.

"I don't care anything about that," said the boy, "if she's really—really the girl for you. You know," he added pertly, "you won't be the easiest person yourself to live with."

XIX

MRS. MORLAND tinkled her little silver bell.

"You may take the tray, Mary. Leave the cups in the pantry. Miss Morland and I will attend to them."

It was Felicia's twenty-second birthday, and her grandmother's coffee service had been brought out in honor of the occasion. The maids were not permitted to wash the old gilt and white mugs. In Mrs. Morland's day the family china had always been cared for by the ladies of the household. The morning's mail was in; birthday notes for Felicia and a letter from Dick, addressed to Mrs. Morland, now lying, opened, by her plate. She was sitting very straightly in her chair.

"Have you heard from Francis, daughter?"

"Not yet. Senior 'activities' are beginning now. I probably shall in a day or two."

"Birthday notes sent as afterthoughts would better be left unwritten," said Mrs. Morland. "I shall tell that to Francis."

"Please don't. I dare say he's not writing on purpose. I hate this convention of birthdays, anyway. After you cease to be a child and have candles they ought to be forgotten. And now I have all these silly letters to answer!"

The winter had wrought its changes in these two. Mrs. Morland observed her children's world now, no longer trying to be a part of it. But, as she ceased to guide it, the more closely did she scrutinize and appraise its doings. The secretive subtleties of age were beginning to show in the watchfulness of those old eyes, in the note of irony in the rigid precision of her comments upon the opinions and ways of this new generation which felt so little need of hers. The unconscious egotism of a stiffening mind was busy, building

up the complicated defenses, the self-justifying judgments, of an ageing spirit. She sat much alone of late in her own room, absorbed in memories; her hands, which her children could hardly think of without something shaping itself under the swift fingers, lying idle in her lap. The fast graying hair was the outward index to the flecks of ashes slowly filtering upon her spirit.

The girl had changed, too. As she glanced about the dining room, dim and subdued by the human usage of the past, it seemed a prison. Alike and yet unlike her brother, she, too, now wanted to move. Better to live in a house with golden oak furniture and Pompeiian red wall-paper, or any other horror, if only it were alive and modern! She looked up, ocasionally, toward her mother as she commented upon her letters. It seemed as if she had always seen her, sitting there behind the breakfast dishes, always seen her, sitting in her low chair, sewing, knitting, talking with that cool precision; always heard her making pronouncements with that air of secure authority. The two were no longer mother and daughter; the acceptance of each other, in the terms of that relationship, had passed. They were a young woman, girlhood over, aware of herself; and an old woman who, under sincerest conviction that she was moved by duty and self-sacrifice, was ever more tenacious of her own opinion, more certain that she was right. There was faint, if unconfessed, antagonism between the two.

"If I may refer again to this letter from Mr. Blaisdell, Felicia. I still think it requires some explanation. Why should he write to me that he is coming over, soon, to call on us? You have not been seeing him this winter."

"I haven't seen him to speak to since November. How can I tell, Mother?"

"Well, it can only mean one thing; he must be going to ask if he can call regularly."

"He's much more likely to announce that intention than to ask permission for it!"

"Quite so! From what I recall of him I can well believe

it! But I cannot imagine that he would find any satisfaction in fulfilling it, and that, of course, must be intimated to him."

"But it may be I should find satisfaction in it. You don't like him because he's a powerful, uneducated sort of person——"

"I think 'uncultivated' is the word you mean, Felicia."

"All right, call it that. Whatever it is, it's not a crime nor a scandal! And I don't see why we shouldn't permit him to come over if he wants to!"

"Because," said Mrs. Morland calmly, "he would be coming for one reason and we should be receiving him for another. We can hardly do that."

"Then, dear, I will absolve you from all responsibility in the matter. You know very well I can make him understand what coming here does and does not mean." For the first time she looked directly at the older woman. "When he comes, and as often as he comes, I mean to see him."

"It is a happy experience," said Mrs. Morland, "to find myself opposed at once by both my children. But then, why else does one have them!"

"Why, indeed. There, Mother, I'm sorry! Goodness knows, I'd like, if I only could, not to be opposing you so often. Let's get through with this breakfast service now. It's brightening up outside; I believe it's going to clear."

So they washed and wiped and put back the old coffee mugs on their upper shelf. How flat and stale were these perpetually recurring household tasks, always to be done, never to be finished. She was thinking of many things as the morning dragged on. "If he's really 'reformed' he may be 'good'—and impossible. Why is it one doesn't mind a man's being a scapegrace if only, when he's with us, we can make him into a saint!" They were sitting in her chamber, after luncheon, she answering her notes at the old writing-box, her mother looking through the pages of the *Christian Intelligencer*. There was a column of witticisms on

the back page; occasionally she would read one aloud in her precise voice. Usually there was something highly diverting to Felicia in the way in which her mother conscientiously appreciated humor, brought a grave intelligence to bear upon it. But to-day it annoyed her. The room was uncomfortably warm; her mother's presence seemed to fill every nook and cranny of it.

"Is there no way we can persuade Dennis not to stoke the furnace so? This place must be a hundred!"

She raised the window and leaned out toward the raw, sweet air. Her eyes followed the old garden paths where as children she and Francis had played together. The remembrance of it, and of those simple, early days, threw her into a half-depressed, half-bitter contemplation. How long a time since she and Francis had been playmates! Time passed so much faster than it used; youth too passed with it. It had rained with pattering showers all the morning, but now the soft blue sky showed through the rounded partings in the clouds and a pale sunlight fell aslant the trees. She yielded to the indulgence of sentimental revery.

"Look, Mother, it's as if Fra Angelico's Madonna had spread her robe above the sun!"

"You'll catch cold at that open window, Felicia. There's nothing more dangerous at this time of year."

"All right; if it's dangerous, I want it. 'When joy and duty clash, let duty go to smash!' I'm not a particle cold!"

Mrs. Morland got up and went into her own chamber. The girl continued listening dreamily to the water dripping from the eaves and trickling down the wooden spouts with a tentative, uncertain sound. The outlines of the elms were blurred and misty, a million swelling, tiny buds were moving forward into a new and tender life. How old and close the house smelled, how sweet the freshness of the moist air; she bathed brow and hands in it. She heard the frolic and the laughter of the children playing on the steps of the flats across the way.

"Mother," she called out, "let's open the garden this

summer to all the babies of these new neighbors of ours! I might have games for them."

There was no answer and she turned back into the room. Her mother had disappeared. The maid was standing in the doorway.

"I knocked, miss, but you didn't hear me. There's a student from the college asking for Mrs. Morland and you. Mrs. Morland has gone down." She held out the tray with its cards; it was he.

"Why didn't he say he was going to come to-day, and why didn't Mother wait for me?" she thought with vague irritation. "Look at my hair!" But as she crossed rather hurriedly to the dressing case she felt vital and alert again; once more something was happening. She knew very well that if she wanted it there would be no long months or weeks between this call of Richard Blaisdell's and the next. Yes, another adventure was beginning. Life was pleasant and interesting after all! Five minutes later she ran down the staircase and came blandly into the parlor.

"This is so unexpected as to be quite overwhelming," she cried coolly, nodding lightly and impersonally to him across the table. "Mother and I haven't recovered from the surprise of your note yet. And how little you change with the years! Really, I should have known you anywhere!"

"Miss Morland!"

She stopped rather suddenly. Dick had paid no attention to the banter. She had an annoying suspicion that he had hardly heard it. He had risen quickly from his seat with that exclamation; now he was right across the room, his hand enveloping hers, though she could not recall that she had invited that greeting. Then, as impulsively as he had come, he returned to his seat by Mrs. Morland. "This is hardly according to Hoyle," thought Felicia. She did not greatly enjoy being taken off guard that way. "It certainly will infuriate Mother!" But now he appeared quite absorbed in the elder woman and in what he was saying to her.

" . . . I noticed it was gone as soon as I came into the room. I won't ever forget the first time I called here! It was in the afternoon and the sun was creeping up the wall and beginning to touch that old picture. I thought it was going to come to life! It seemed as if the eyes were just looking me all over. It made me feel awfully far away from home while I waited here!"

A little flush tinged Mrs. Morland's pale cheeks.

"It is a picture of a member of the family temporarily removed for restoration," she said coldly. "It is many years since I have been in New York," she continued evenly, "but family portraits were not uncommon then in the houses that I knew.

"Oh," he laughed, "there are family portraits enough, now. But you don't see that sort of a picture in a New York 'reception room'! What you see there are brand new ones! And there's old-fashioned furniture, too; if you're awfully 'swell' you don't have anything else! I guess that's why I don't like it! Now here it's the setting that makes it so wonderful; it isn't 'museum pieces'; it's a part of everything else!"

"For goodness sake, thought Felicia, "can't he get away from personalities?"

"Yes," Mrs. Morland was saying in the same even tone. "Yes?"

"Well, I suppose," said Dick, "that I like it here because this isn't merely a room, it's the center of a home. It's home, isn't it, that makes anything valuable. In those swell New York houses you feel as though they were sort of domestic museums. You've got to live up to the room or else they'll look down on you. This house helps you to live up to yourself!"

Mrs. Morland laughed a low but genuine laugh. It rather surprised and disconcerted Felicia; she had not expected that reaction. And how long it was since she had heard her mother really laugh!

"Mr. Blaisdell," said the older woman, "you're quite a

poet. You see into the heart of things! You mentioned your people," she continued impersonally; "is your father a Harvard man?"

"Oh, no! He didn't go to college at all. He was born up-State, in Aurora, and went into business, wholesale manufacturing, first there and then, later, in Bigtown. But Father believes in college! It's because he appreciated it that he wanted it for me. I wish I'd made more of it! Mrs. Morland," he went on a little embarrassed now and a little more aggressive because of it, "I've just been home to see my father; only got back this morning." (Felicia stirred in her chair.) "I wanted to talk to him about next year and what I want to do, and he was just great! Dad always thought I'd go into business with him, and I know he's looked forward to it. But this winter," he continued, his grave eyes suddenly looking over toward Felicia as if he had just begun to remember her again, "I've set my heart on a certain profession, and so I went home and told him. I didn't know whether he would understand. But Dad was simply corking—he *saw* what I meant! He told me to go ahead and that he'd stand by me! I'm so sort of broken up by it I don't quite know how to speak about it. I'm ashamed that I didn't know that, of course, he'd understand and see! And Mother," he concluded, laughing to cover his embarrassment, "Mother said to me just as I came away, 'Dick, you've made your father so proud he won't have a hat left that fits him!'"

Felicia laughed outright, an irrepressible ripple of irritated amusement. But Mrs. Morland quite unconsciously caught up her glasses and gazed fixedly at Dick through them.

"What?" she said very gently. "What was that you say your mother said?"

Dick laughed.

"That's New York substitute for the English language, Mrs. Morland. What Mother meant was that Father was proud and pleased over my new plans."

"Oh," said Mrs. Morland, "I see." She dropped her glass.

Meanwhile Felicia, since for the moment she seemed to have no other occupation, was regarding him with some curiosity and intentness. She found it difficult to place him satisfactorily—that is, satisfactorily as regarded where she had supposed he could be placed. He had changed quite differently to, and beyond, her expectation. He was so much younger, which amused and faintly annoyed her; and so much older, too, but that in ways that surprised and disconcerted her. The buoyant speech, the ruddy cheek, the ingenuous boyish laugh, these had taken years from his appearance, and they did not seem in keeping with his great frame. But what teased her mind was such appalling simplicity joined to such confident expression and power! Just how was one to meet such a combination? It was that air of undisturbed resourcefulness that made him seem so much older. Positively, what with the firm poise of the head, the compact bulk of him, that direct and outspoken speech, he looked and acted the youthful master!

And that did not please her at all! Here was no boy to confess his waywardness, to plead for sympathy, to offer his spirit like wax for her supple hands. "But before Mother's through with him," she thought with pleasant acidity, "he may learn who it is that rushes in where angels dare not tread!" And then he would turn to her for help.

"Perhaps," she remarked lightly across the table to him, "as you've referred to your plans for next year, you'll tell Mother and me a little about them. Then we shan't feel as if we were getting acquainted again with quite such a total stranger!"

He smiled kindly at her raillery. "As if I were a small child!" she thought with amazed vexation. And then he turned back again to Mrs. Morland. It seemed to Felicia that her mother was not wholly unaware of the frank and spontaneous deference he was paying her. And it also occurred to Felicia that it must be a long while since any

young man had addressed to Mrs. Morland the major portion of his conversation. Again she looked intently at Dick; was he, was he quite as childlike as he seemed? Oh, if he were merely astute she could soon match him! But this candid simplicity——

"I'd like to tell you all about them," he was saying. "One reason why I came over was because I wanted to speak about my hopes for next year, especially as I expect to be in Boston." He looked directly and earnestly at the elder woman. "May I?"

There fell an utter silence at that. Mrs. Morland looked long and searchingly at the youth before her. Over everything from the large and shapely feet up to the stubborn shock of hair the old eyes traveled and came back again to dwell upon his face. Dick was a little white, but he was looking at her steadily, bravely, without blenching. Finally she spoke impersonally:

"We can claim no especial privilege or right to hear, but whatever you would like to tell us we shall be glad to listen to." On the whole she didn't seem to find him so perplexing or, so it seemed to Felicia, quite so amazing as did her daughter.

"Thank you," said Dick heartily. But now Felicia noticed how that huge hand of his began to clench and unclench quite rhythmically upon his knee. It was the only sign of discomposure, or was it perhaps tension, that he indicated. "For goodness sake," she thought, "why can't he sit quietly and at ease!" But her mother apparently was not altogether displeased to see evidences of deep emotion in a youth.

"I want to go into medicine," he said. "I think it's been growing and coming up deep down inside me for some time. Because I've sort of instinctively been taking courses in college, like biology and chemistry, which would lead right toward it. You know things do happen that way. But I wasn't certain of it until this last trip home. I went over to the Presbyterian Hospital Saturday to see a cousin of mine who is ill there. That's a wonderful great place; it

covers nearly two city blocks—and I could see there just what being a doctor is like. It would be like being in some sort of an ideal business, something practical, I mean: but where you're always in contact with human beings, not customers or ledgers: and having real contacts with them, too, not just doing endless arguing like these intellectual chaps, or foolish patter like society folks! And business that's really a profession because you don't work for money, but work for people. I went through the children's ward just before I came away. I can see them now," he smiled at Mrs. Morland as though confident that she would understand, "they had hands like little claws lying on the coverlets. Then there were some of them who were getting well and playing round in the sun room. There's nothing in the world like a child," he concluded simply. "As soon as I see one I want to do something for it. Yes, I'm going to be a doctor!"

At that reference to children Felicia studied him again. She began to feel a little more distance—even antagonism toward him. She noticed quite coldly his checked suit: small checks and quiet enough, but really a perfect horror. As though he were some sort of sportsman, not a college student.

"Harvard has an honorable record in medicine," said Mrs. Morland graciously. "It was a graduate of our college who discovered Nathan Smith on a Connecticut farm and made him into the doctor who founded medical schools in three States of New England."

Dick turned to her eagerly.

"I'm glad you told me that. Because I feel a good deal of responsibility to the college as to what I do after I get out." He looked up at Felicia. "I told you once, you know: that the college didn't care about me one way or the other, I'm ashamed of that now. I was really accusing myself and not knowing it. I've found myself in that old Yard! Now I've got to live like it!"

Mrs. Morland was sitting motionless, as if in these last

minutes the inner life, never visible, had withdrawn now to some even more inaccessible distance.

"I didn't remember that she was such an old woman," thought Dick. His quick spirit felt the loneliness and remoteness of that upright, inflexible figure. How often he had felt the world withdrawn and indifferently sweeping by. He realized for the first time in his life the tragic isolation of old age. Suddenly he spoke with that serene tenderness, that startling directness, that had so often amazed Percy.

"The Yard and the college must have changed a lot since your day, but you mustn't think it's a real change. Underneath it's the same place, and, if we only knew it, it binds us all together. We younger ones get it because you who are older pass it on."

Felicia gave an inaudible gasp. There was something fated in such assurance. Imagine anyone's even daring to offer to her mother a comprehending sympathy! But Mrs. Morland was looking at Dick with some intensity now; there leaped up for a fleeting moment a response and acceptance of his speech in her pale eyes. Then it quickly vanished again. But there was less of that impersonal pleasantness in her voice when she answered:

"You are the first generation of Harvard men in your family, I think you said. May I ask what you meant when you said about the college, 'Now I've got to live like it'?"

"Do something more than just going out to make my own living," said Dick simply. "I've—I've been rather up against it these last months, and Dr. Barrett and the Dean have stood by me, and the fellows are doing it, too. Until lately I didn't have much use for the college, but I can see why now; it was going the other way from mine, and all the time pulling me back. There wasn't anything particular said or done; it was just what the place was. I felt the disapproval of it, and that's why I hated it. But now I want to give back to it what I've had. The college isn't just a place of learning. That's why I get so sore with this highbrow stuff. It doesn't get you anywhere—it leaves you without a

heart for the people among whom you dwell. There's something practical back of all that which is the real Harvard. It gives us education, not for its own sake, but for intelligent and useful living."

Mrs. Morland leaned forward and spoke with unconcealed bitterness:

"Harvard, then, has taught you to serve your generation? To want to ride near the head of the troops?"

"Oh, yes," said Dick eagerly. "You've said it for me as I wouldn't know how. And that's just why I like medicine; there is such a chance there to be free to march in the vanguard. And that's exactly what the spirit of the college calls for. Harvard's an awfully conservative place, but no one could call it 'reactionary.' We've always turned out pioneers, not standpatters. And doctors seem to be always looking forward and not back; they're willing to blaze new trails and to keep on experimenting. Why, look at this whole new science of preventive medicine that's just beginning. Some young man is going to do and discover a lot in that science alone in these next twenty years!"

"But," said the old woman, "you will not have much money. You will probably be poor. Does not that dismay you? It is necessary for young men nowadays to possess wealth."

Felicia was listening rather in a daze. So far as she could perceive, Dick had for the moment quite forgotten her, and she didn't seem to adjust herself to that. And he appeared to be in frank and eager accord with her mother, and happily, even tenderly, he was showing it. And, incredible as it seemed, Mrs. Morland was tentatively accepting that relationship. It was as though she found in him, beneath crudeness and naïveté, something nearer her attitude toward life than that of her own children, recognized some strain of the spiritual lineage which she prized. And that was the last straw for Felicia. She began to range him on "her side" as against her own.

"I know," Dick was continuing to her mother, "but I

don't care much. I've had money these four years and it hasn't gotten me very far. And I'm more or less ashamed of the way I've used it. I shall feel better when I begin to earn my own bread and butter. Besides, I'm just beginning to see how many boys there are caught like cogs in a machine. They have no chance; where they happen to be, there they must remain. Routine labor is what nine-tenths of men have to grind out for their living. Isn't it service through creative labor which the college and the nation expect from an educated man?"

He stopped abruptly, suddenly become self-conscious. He was horribly afraid that he had been preachy, or trying to show off. Then, surprised, he quickly rose. For Mrs. Morland was on her feet, her face ineffably sad. She came up to where her near-sighted eyes could look into his own, her voice intolerably proud and bitter.

"You seem to understand our college. Do you know that if you start upon this path that when you come to the end of it you will walk alone—alone?"

"Mother, dearest Mother, don't!" came from Felicia. "You can't expect me to bear this!"

But something like a flash of deep understanding had passed from Dick's eyes to those of the older woman. He spoke with frank gentleness:

"I know that I may—may have to walk alone. But I'm not afraid of that any longer. I've been used to it." He paused, and looked at her again and then added: "Besides —I shouldn't be alone."

Mrs. Morland looked about the room.

"There are many memories here of men and women who have lived the sort of life you have been talking of, this afternoon. I do not know how much longer we shall be here. But while we are, we are glad to share them with you at any time when your new duties will permit you to come."

"Please don't go, Mother," said Felicia hastily, "because I simply must finish my own notes myself. I shall feel quite happy if I can leave Mr. Blaisdell with you."

But already Mrs. Morland had passed out of the room and was slowly going up the stairs. As she left the doorway Felicia glanced inscrutably at Dick. "You may have won Mother over," she was thinking, "but that doesn't mean that you've won over me." She thought it quite time to take the conversation into her own hands.

XX

He crossed the room, a little diffident and awkward now, and sat down on the old sofa, beside her chair.

"I wish those coals were alight again—as they were that first night. It would be easier, somehow. I miss the fire."

"But since there isn't any," she said lightly, "there's no use sitting by it! And where you were," nodding across the table, "is in the sunlight."

"All right," he said stiffly, "but I'd have liked to sit here." He went back to his old seat. "It's almost six months since I sat in this room with you and mended the flame. Do you remember?"

"Oh, yes; I seem to. Did you mend the flame that night? I wasn't certain."

He glanced up doubtfully, wincing a little.

"I've wanted and wanted to come back. There have been days when I've so wanted to, and so feared as to what you must be thinking about me because I didn't come, that I just ate my heart out in longing and despair. But, till today, I couldn't come——"

"You shouldn't have worried about it. By the way, there is at least one thing you didn't tell me that night—that you were taking a course in Italian literature!"

He felt the faint malice in her tone. It baffled and confused him just when he most wanted to think clearly.

"Italian literature? I'm not taking any."

"But how else explain this Machiavellian subtlety." She laughed gently. "I thought you'd been reading *The Prince* from the skill with which you addressed yourself to Mother."

"I wasn't doing anything except answering her questions.

She certainly did ask a good many. And then, too, answering *her* toward the end of it. It didn't take any subtlety, as you call it," he went on doggedly, "just being honest and frank." He looked up wistfully: "Miss Morland, is there anything the matter? She seems so much older than she used to, and she's unhappy."

"My goodness! You're even franker in asking questions than you are in answering them, aren't you? There isn't anything the matter. Of course if there were I should just hasten to tell you."

He got up at that and came around the table again.

"I guess, if you don't mind, I'll sit here after all. I want to be where I can really see you." The effort of the coming utterance he was pushing toward made his voice harsh. It sounded artificial to him and that made him still more miserable. "You'll never know how I've wanted to be here in this room again. Now I am here I can't realize it. It—it shook me so to-day to find myself really coming that I didn't know what I would do or say after I got here, or whether I could say anything at all except one thing that I've got to tell——"

But she was still regarding him, in his reclaimed place on the sofa, with indulgent amusement.

"Honestly, Richard Blaisdell, I've never seen anyone like you—no one anywhere near like you! It's quaint, when you haven't seen a man for most half a year, to find him so terribly at ease with the family."

She realized the almost open discourtesy of her sharp banter, was both surprised and vexed to perceive the quick antagonisms which came to the surface in her, now, as she sat with him. Something in him pushed her to self-realization as though what he was, as felt in attitude and speech, created comparisons which revealed her own restless and uncertain inner life. It was not like her to be quite so deliberately malicious, but that vague sense of unfavorable self-appraisement which he stirred in her produced a resentful defensiveness which demanded satisfaction. Such a reversal of their

former relationship was far from her liking. But there was something of indignation in his eyes, now, and a clarifying and stiffening of resolution with it.

"I'm not at ease. You can see that all right for yourself. And you're not making me any easier. But I've got, and am going, to tell you something. There have been days—and nights when I've just kept going by looking forward to this moment——"

"That night of the freshman dinner, for instance?"

He flushed a vivid crimson then and his mouth set.

"You know? And then you pushed me to talk about it! You needn't have reminded me: It's what I've been trying —trying to get a running start for so as to be able to talk about it. Oh, I was going to tell you!"

"But there are limits to what even a cave-man, disguised in a checked suit, can do! I did have some slight interest in refreshing your memory as to that evening but none whatever as to sharing it. Really, you must excuse me from that!"

He stood up then and that new quality in him that Phil and Percy had more than once experienced, but which she had not foreseen, came to the surface.

"I'm not sure what you're trying to do, Miss Morland. Is it to bring me to heel and then, when I'm there, perhaps some crumbs will fall my way? You don't want to hear about that night? No! But you wanted to refer to it and let me see you knew about it and then see me suffer? My God!" he said under his breath, "how cruel a 'good' woman likes to be!" He looked about vaguely. "I—I don't understand it. I've seen you, heard you, talked to you, lived by you all this winter, and now, when I actually do come, it isn't you—it's someone else I find here."

She didn't quite like that; the attack shifted, she yielded a little.

"Don't be absurd! I'm only playing!"

He sat down and looked at her.

"Playing! Of course! Why not?"

"Yes," she repeated, "why not? All you men expect that you shall be immune from banter or hurt! We, oh, we must always be sympathetic, never hurt ourselves, never playful to hide it."

"You're still fencing," he went on calmly. "You're not on the level with me yet! Well, I haven't been playing with life these last few months, and I don't propose now that life or you shall play with me. I've paid my price for the right to come here to-day. If I hadn't, you wouldn't be seeing me. I could talk to your mother because at the end she trusted me. Is it because you don't that you're not letting me talk to you?"

"Don't? Why, why shouldn't I? Why don't you take it for granted?"

But he still regarded her unflinchingly.

"Look here; I've told you that I came here to-day feeling that I'd be getting home at last when I came to you. Do you think a fellow could do that who isn't straight?"

"So you don't take it for granted? To be sure, there's that night——"

"I knew one of us had changed a good deal in these six months; now I guess we both have. Perhaps I oughtn't to expect to take things up again without misunderstandings. Perhaps you seem so different because I am different. Perhaps because I was—what I was—I didn't really see you straight! I don't know," he looked hardily at her, "but I'm going to find out."

It was not so much the suffering in his voice but rather the unexpected scrutiny of her that accompanied it, and the undeviating determination in him, that troubled her. It put her inwardly on the defensive, made impossible that continued attack. But she was not used to defensive attitudes. Once more it was not turning out quite the pleasant afternoon she had anticipated.

"It may be that it hasn't been an easy winter for me either," she said in a low voice, "and—and it's not nice of you to take me up so!"

"Listen," he answered quietly, his voice grown gentler, "you sent me a message by Dr. Barrett, didn't you? And I sent my answer back. And later on, when you met Phil, you asked to be remembered to me. Didn't that mean friendship on your part? You would hardly want me to think that it was just sport or frivolity! That *would* be insulting you."

"Of course it meant friendship. It's rather humiliating, don't you think, to have to assure you of it?"

"I'm sorry," he said in some bewilderment, "if I've been misunderstanding you this last half hour." He was still looking very searchingly at her. "For I've got to tell you something, and when I have it's for you to decide whether I'm to keep that friendship any longer. But I can't, I just can't, tell it unless you're trusting me while I do it. I couldn't go through it without that! All I want is to be trusted enough to be heard!"

"I think you're still misjudging me," she said sadly. "I've shown pretty clearly all winter that I hadn't forgotten you and did believe in you, and now you're—you're challenging me. Sometimes I think any woman's a fool to suppose that a man ever understands her!"

His heart was heavy, he didn't know why; it was going to be infinitely harder to speak than he had expected. Irrespective of whose fault, or no one's fault, there wasn't any inward bond between them as yet that afternoon. He knew it and he wouldn't deny it to himself even at that moment. But the time had come to go on without it. He girded up his will to battle through.

"That night I left here I did a—a dreadful, a beastly thing. That very night on which I sat before your fire I went back into town—I went away from here to drink and let go—let go again. I lost my grip," he went on jerkily. "No, I hadn't any grip. But when I sat here with you I thought you had given me one. I've got it for myself now. But that—that came first, and until I've paid for it and taken all, even the very last of my punishment, I can't be

free. I've paid for it before! But the last and bitterest punishment is right now!"

"I heard something about it; nothing very much. Was that what you came over for to-day? To tell me that!"

"Not because I wanted to! But because I had to! Not because I didn't care what you thought of me, because I care too much! I want truth and only truth and nothing but truth between you and me. We can't go on knowing one another at all unless it's in that way. I can't go one step further unless you know, and, knowing, think you can forgive."

His eyes went old and tired as he finished that last sentence. The girl, looking on that flushed face, saw the scars suddenly stand out; the wounds were healed but the scars were there and always at times, the times when life was bitter or hard, those scars would throb and burn again; never would they quite pass. The stark reality of it sobered and enthralled her too, and the soberness seemed to justify her returning interest in that revealing countenance and these tense moments. She felt at one with herself again, not baffled, denied of her prize any more; and, in that renewal of self-assurance, very tender, very nobly tender, she imagined, toward him. She leaned forward and put her hand on his arm.

"Don't," she said softly, "oh, don't try to bear it all alone! You know I won't add to it. Absolutely, truly, easily it is forgiven!"

He broke for a moment then, but in the breaking he withdrew, protecting her from himself, not letting her be swept on by the sudden uprush of his emotion.

"It's all right," he muttered, "never fear! I'll be on deck again in a jiffy!"

He walked down the room away from her, back turned. Again her feeling veered as if he had spoiled, robbed her, of some supreme moment she had invited him to share. Why didn't he let her soothe and calm him? He was not capitulating even now! He was still controlling. He turned

back, shaken still but outwardly master of himself. But the peak of the moment had passed; at once she was a little weary of it, not untempted to irritation or perversity again. He came forward to his same place, sitting almost beside her, but inwardly she was at odds again and indifferent. He was very quiet now and absolutely trustful; as he talked there were no inhibitions, nor any tumult of passion, but rather tenderness in his speech. Its serenity annoyed, confused, disappointed her.

"I've another thing now to say." He took up her hand as if unconsciously, held it gently for a moment and then released it. "I wish I could write it in some verse or sing it," he smiled whimsically, "in music that would always go singing on. It does go on forever like a chant in my own soul. It was you, you who helped save my life. It was your faith in me that showed me what I was. It was because I was determined to be worthy of that faith that I held on."

He paused, like one resting and utterly satisfied in some bright revery, as if that very moment was enough and in itself its own reward. She caught the dreamy quality of his voice, felt the utter relinquishment of mind and spirit. He was showing her his inmost heart. She sensed that she was walking dangerous ground; that he was taking her into countries alien to her understanding or desire. Her own clear instinct was to temporize, with this and with him, too.

"Oh, Mr. Blaisdell, if only I could ever be as happy as you are now! I just can't believe that I really had anything to do with it."

"Oh, yes, you did. You had—you had at first," he added rather surprisedly, "almost eveything to do with it. I woke up when I came here that night. You made me see what I was in comparison with what I desired. I had to search then, I had to search the world, to find help, if there were help, to make me the new man I wanted and to make the old one cease to be. I don't think I should ever have found it because I shouldn't have tried hard enough, life wouldn't

have been worth it—if it hadn't been for you. And then when you made me search, it was He who did it!"

"'At least at first,'" she quoted softly. "You see I knew I wasn't really so important in it."

"You know you were! I—I didn't know I was going to say that 'at first' until I'd done it. But I'm so happy and at rest this afternoon that everything seems clear and always getting clearer. What I saw when I said that was that now it is that Companionship for itself. But it takes in all the others."

"Still that comes first?"

"Did you mean to ask that question?" he said quietly, "or is it one of those surprising questions—I've had them—that just ask you?"

"It's that," she said hastily. "And I do so want to hear about it."

"Well," he said, "you and I don't need to guard our questions or answers with each other." Again, as before that afternoon, something of panic seized her at the high certainty of his assurance. "I don't know how to answer what I guess was in your mind when you put it that way, because they lie so close together in me, what you are and what He does and is. But they are different—there's no clash between them—yet they're different, different in kind, too. It would be—be degrading to mix them up. There was a night—a night when I was alone, alone in the whole world. I was fighting not to go under forever. I came to know that night that there was Something outside of me that could answer and save that other Something within me. But while I knew it I couldn't find it. And then there came a moment when, suddenly, as if without cause or reason, I was lifted up. It was like being in some watchtower and looking over a landscape, and the strife fell away, and the awful voices ceased, and pleasures, the old pleasures died. For a while they seemed infinitely vain; they died. And then in my heart I heard a new voice calling from without and I knew He'd found me and I'd found Him."

She looked at him fixedly.

"Why then should anything, anyone else, matter? You couldn't, wouldn't do without this new Companionship now?"

"I couldn't do without the other either," he said smiling.

"But if you had to in order to keep this; would you feel then that you were 'alone' again?"

"I'm glad I haven't got to face that," he said with untroubled serenity. "But if I did have to, I wouldn't, as I told your mother, be afraid to be alone any more. I've lived alone—God knows how much alone this winter. I've found that a man may be left to himself and yet not be lonely in this world."

"So if you had to choose?"

"Why push it so?" he said a little sharply. "If I had to choose I shouldn't be able to. There is no choice there. I must keep Him, for if I lost Him I should lose this other, too. And I suppose, since you've made me think of it, that—oh, I seem to know that if I keep Him I can't really lose anything else."

The utter assurance, the calm and undeniable certainty in conjunction with his great frame and type of mind produced a kind of madness in her.

"How wonderful and how pitiable!" she said uncontrollably. "To be able to believe in things like God and prayer! Perhaps it is my misfortune, but in a world like this it simply means nothing to me."

"It is a great misfortune," he assented gravely, "You're like all the rest of them that know so much. It seems to crowd out knowing the only thing that all the other knowledge is for! But you'll know, too, now."

Whether he was aware of it or not she knew that the invisible threads that had bound him to her in these last moments had parted. She felt the unconscious withdrawal of his spirit, as though of its own volition it had moved off from her. And she had gone physically restless, terribly tired now of the interview and of him; in a tumult, anxious to

get free. But first, at any cost, to renew the hold on him—of what use seeing him or dreaming, wondering, experimenting, finding out and enjoying herself in him, else? She moved back to safer topics.

"Can't you tell me a litle more about those months of fighting—what you did? I've so wondered!"

He shifted himself in the chair. "Oh, you've had it all, already. I had to get hold again and of course my work was all to pieces. I had to plug at that. There was a dreadful sameness to it, that's sure. The Dean was mighty good to me and Dr. Barrett," he added suddenly, "was absolutely white, a friend when I most needed one."

"I think I had something to do with that."

"You?" He turned to face her again; he was passing rapidly out of the mood of those last moments now. "You? You never asked him to look after me, do any 'reforming stunt,' did you?"

"No, no! Of course not! Don't you think I'd know you'd never stand for that?"

"I'd not think anyone would stand for it! But what do you mean, then?"

"Why, it was just the contrary! I tried to let him see what he was missing, not you! It was to help him that I was doing it."

"I don't get it. I'll bet I wouldn't have liked that, either, if I'd been he and had understood! I certainly don't want to think that his relationship with me all these months hasn't been a real one. Or that you," he added, "in saying—saying what you did to me that night—were taking the 'big sister' attitude and—and interest in me. I'd have rather less than no use for that relationship with you or anyone!" he concluded hardily, his face flushing.

"Truly, Mr. Blaisdell, you're getting it all wrong. Please ——"

But he was still wondering, exploring, underneath, that new train of thought. Again she was to experience his calm persistency.

"You haven't asked a word about Phil Spenser. Did you

like him? I want him to really know you. May I bring him over some time?"

"Delicious incarnation of 'first youth.' Oh, yes, if you'd like to."

"You quite floored him that day. I expect," laughing grimly, "you were rather dazzlingly hard on him—quite easy for me to imagine that, you know."

"But I don't want to think or talk about him or Dr. Barrett, now. The freshmen we have always with us!"

"He's more than a freshman," said Dick significantly. "Shrewd little cuss! Sees more than you might think for."

"All right, I'll grant every word of it," she replied, half laughing. "But please keep on now with what you were telling me."

He did go on, then, but more slowly. There was not the former freedom in his speaking now.

"Oh, I stayed in Cambridge through the recess boning up on two make-up exams. There isn't any more to it. I've paid my price and I'm free, and I'm forgetting it just as fast as I can. I'd like to forget it all if I could; never have to rake it up again. I've finished with that, this afternoon," he said flatly. "It's past—done. Now, I want to start out on what's coming."

So that was all. She had thought, vaguely, of those perhaps repeated days of going over old memories with him, of something strengthening and inspiring for him, absorbing and ennobling for her, in such an exercise. Wasn't that the way to really enter into his life—and, through it, into life in general? She was startled at his evident intent and expectation that now they should both go forward, at once, into some new relationship; she was not ready for that, yet. She went on, temporizing:

"Do you know, I saw you one afternoon in the Square! The week before Percy Barrett had his tea."

"In the Square? Oh, if only I could have seen you!"

"I was going home from a Brooks House reception, where I had to pour. I can assure you I didn't feel like being seen by anyone. It was a dismal party! Really, it was a

relief to get back here and see all the children, from the flats across the street, playing on the sidewalks like natural and merry human beings. Why is it that, as soon as one of you becomes a graduate student, he becomes awkward and self-conscious? I do wish you'd tell me what life is really like, over there. You know all about it. Perhaps, then, one could understand them!"

"You—you like children?" There was profound reserve in his voice.

"Children? Oh, I adore them! If only I could be a child again. Why do we have to grow up! I'd give anything to go back and be like them again. They have the secret of living!"

"I don't want to be a child, again," he said briefly. "It wouldn't satisfy me at all. There's something better than that, ahead." Somehow the afternoon was ended then. He turned to her. "I've got to go back to my work. May I keep on coming over?"

"You know Mother told you she'd always be glad to see you," said the girl brightly. "She's hardly ever out, so you're almost sure to find her."

"May I come to see you?" he said steadily. She curtsied and laughed, and held out a frank hand in parting. "Always most happy to see you!"

But she sat with her mother that evening locked in an impenetrable reserve. She knew that events were pushing her where some decision must be made as to Percy and his plea; yet she never more resented having to make choices than now. Nor did she know herself what she wanted to say or do. Only that she would like everything to go on as it was for a while.

And Dick, back in the Mathews study, did not mention to Phil where he had been that afternoon. "After all," he thought, "what am I beside a girl like that! It's my fault, not hers, if we weren't really looking at the same things. I ought not to have expected to get very far the first time. But, in the end, we shall—we will."

XXI

SOMETHING had given way in Morland. He found that nights, such as the one he had passed huddled in the chair, could not be forgotten and ignored as though they had never been. Neither home nor college might ever know of them, he might dismiss them from his own mind, but their inescapable if unconfessed reality was a fact and its ensuing consequences also. That first night's utter letting go had marked the beginning of another stage in his unfolding; a fresh series of motives, with their accompanying actions, began slowly to manifest themselves.

The most surprising was a new and deliberate recklessness, the temptation to take a chance. The old furtiveness, the elaborate secretiveness was still there, but, presently, he began to play with it, as if, now that he had gone all the way along the winding, doubling path of sensuous delight, there was nothing else sufficiently piquant to tempt him except the risking of his own gilded security. And this growing recklessness was the more inevitable because, after that first relinquishment of all restraints, he found he could not always get them back. He could not be sure now of what he would do, or how, or when he would end, if he began one of those solitary evenings. Thus, the dim sense of his captivity added the spur of foreboding to the recklessness, and the recklessness pushed on those practices which made stronger and more complete the captivity from which the foreboding sprung.

So Francis became careless; he, the shrewd and subtle, took chances. He purchased his liquor more openly than before; sometimes he no longer drew the curtains of a night; once he forgot to lock his door. He imagined that he was very much of a man as he thus skated over the thin

ice between himself and exposure, saw himself as indifferent to public opinion, lifted above the standards and judgments of the crowd, secure in his own convictions. Callousness was courage; madness he translated into valor. And after a while it followed that questioning looks and whispered comments began to gather around his person and his name. Francis Morland was a bit off-color; there was something wrong; he was going down hill. The fact that no one knew just what was the trouble added interest and vividness to the under-current of speculation as it percolated through the compact undergraduate community.

Every tale that passed from mouth to mouth had a different implication in it. Some had it that behind locked doors veritable orgies were held in that quiet room in Claverly; others, that "for years" Morland had been a periodical drinker, having spells of utter abandonment to pleasure that occurred at regular intervals. It was the unusual element in these tales upon which interest and imagination fastened. There were distinctions in these boyish minds between those dissipations, which, foolish and reprehensible though they were, yet belonged to the immemorial weaknesses of their kind, and those other lapses of lying, card-cheating, and pleasures which lay outside the pale of accepted indulgence, and from which, with one accord, they shrank. Thus, it was not the tales that Morland drank; it was Morland, the solitary drinker, which filled the undergraduate mind. It was long ago remarked that there is something not altogether displeasing to us even in the misfortunes of our best friends. How much less, then, did the college pity or condone when the popular idol, secretly envied from afar, seemed falling from his pedestal.

So it came about that some three weeks after that first afternoon Dick had spent in Roxbury, Phil ran up to the study one day, after his two-thirty, an interesting mixture of surprise, shock and furtive satisfaction in his young eyes.

"Say, Dick, have you heard what's being talked about Morland all round the Yard?"

Dick glanced up from his book abstractedly.

"I know what was said about him last night after the Cercle Francais meeting."

He was looking graver again. Twice had he returned to the old house across the Charles, getting back late of an evening, coming in tired, Phil thought, but saying nothing. The younger boy asked no questions, but sometimes he would come upon him sunk deep in thought, always of a sturdy cheerfulness, but in his eyes something of perplexity and doubt, as though he were gazing at hitherto unperceived features in a familiar landscape and were studying them out, putting them in their proper places.

"What was it Trowbridge got off that kicked up such a row?"

"It was after the meeting and some of the fellows were just loafing round, smoking and chinning. Adams brought up the Class Elections, said he thought it was a mistake to hold them in the fall so soon after the football season. Meant that scholarship was ignored and only athletes got the big places. 'Well, there's Morland,' said some one, 'he was elected third marshal. He's no athlete!' 'No,' said Adams, rather sneering, 'I wouldn't call him that!' Then Kulmer spoke up; you know he's a good deal of a prig, and very ambitious, always has a grouch on. He was terribly in earnest, but my guess is he was really jealous and didn't know it. Said that Morland didn't represent the class, that he wasn't a typical Harvard man, but just the sort that those outside laughed at as æsthetes and rah-rahs, and so on. It wasn't a sporting speech and it ought to have been ignored. On the whole, it would have helped Morland with the fellows rather than hurt him if it had been let be. But Jack was there and he spoke up like a shot, angry as the devil, lighting into Kulmer, telling him to say just what he meant or else retract and apologize. Jack was some sight; he stood there like an Ajax, his eyes blazing, and, of course, it was just nuts to the fellows. But then he made a mistake. He's more used to acting on his

feet than talking and he managed to put across the notion that Morland, because of his standing and family, is the sort of man who is, so to speak, above suspicion. Jack's the last man in the world to be snobbish, it simply isn't in him; but at the same time, while he's democratic, there's a sort of family pride in him, too, and he was excited and clumsy in the way he said it. So the boys thought he was trying to ram Morland, as the son of an old Boston family, down their throats. Then they all joined in and backed up Kulmer, and, of course, when we went away everyone was talking about it. The thing that surprised me was to see how quickly they turned on Morland once they got a chance. I don't think there was a man there that really likes him. Jack was pretty sick over it."

"But, Dick, they say he——"

"I know," said Dick quietly, "you needn't mind telling me. They say he drinks."

"Oh, worse than that! They say he's a periodical drunkard; that he has regular spells when he just deserts college and shuts himself up in some hotel in Boston and has a three-days' spree. They say it began 'way back in 'prep' days, and that he's been one wonder in concealing it so that it's only just beginning to leak out. They say——"

"Look here," broke in Dick, "where'd you hear all that stuff?"

"Reggie Ames and Ed Saunders——"

"That fat little tattle-tale of a Monty been talking?"

"Monty calls it 'a small wash with a large hang-out!'"

"Well, he's got more horse-sense than all the rest of you. Where'd those other chaps get it from?"

"I don't know. Somebody said——"

"Yes," said Dick, "'somebody said!' I should think freshmen could find something better to do than to spread tales like that, absurd on the face of 'em, about an upper classman. D'you think any fellow who began that kind of a racket 'way back in school could have kept it up on the q.t. and lasted this long?"

"Well, where there's so much smoke there's generally some fire. They're all saying that he ought to resign the marshalship and give it over to Kulmer because he ran him a close second. Someone spoke of writing to the *Crimson* or getting up a petition or something."

"Writing to the *Crimson!* Getting up a petition! Ha-ha! I'd like to see who'd dare do it! Look here," Dick continued, suddenly swinging round to face Phil, a sort of generous indignation kindling in his eyes, "just you freshmen stop gossiping. I knew Morland pretty well in the beginning of our freshman year. I haven't much use for him as a man, but the last thing he'd do would be to get rackety on drink—he's too darn prudent and careful for that! The next time you hear those stories you say that it's all rot, you don't believe 'em. For Heaven's sake, what sort of a thing is this for men to be doing! Worse than an old woman's tea party! Give the fellow a chance!"

"Maybe they won't write to the *Crimson,"* said Phil huffily. "But they won't need to do any more than they are doing now to make it a sick Class Day for him. News travels."

"That's true," said Dick soberly, "worse luck! Damn it, I'm going to get into it."

"You! Oh, for Heaven's sake, Dick, don't get your name mixed up in it."

"Why not?"

"I should think anyone could see why not! You know as well as I that he's only getting what's coming to him. After a man's been treated by him the way you were I should think his self-respect would keep him from interfering!"

"So? Well, I see it just the other way. I guess it's my self-respect that makes me willing to jump into it."

"Well, you're beyond me! I wish I'd never mentioned it. I don't understand it, and, what's more, no one else will, either!"

"Being understood isn't the first or only thing," said

Dick after a pause. "I certainly used to believe so; what the fellows thought, that was pretty nearly everything to me. I tell you the public opinion of this place is one awful weapon. That's why you've got to be careful what you do with it. Nearly every man here is afraid of what the other man is thinking. But I don't care as much about it as I used. The main thing's to get square inside, be on good terms with yourself."

"Oh! of course, of course! What's that got to do with it? It's none of our business. Let him take his medicine, it doesn't trouble me any."

"Yes, it does," said Dick. "You're glad of it. So it does trouble you. I haven't any personal feeling to-day toward him one way or the other. I suppose that's why, now he's in dutch, I'm sorry for him. In a sense, if he's in trouble, I guess I like him."

"Dick, won't you please keep your feet on the ground! You don't mean that, and I know you don't. I won't let you like him!"

"Better hold your horses, then! Because, now that you oppose it, I know I do! We were freshmen in Weld together. He was 'way up in the sunlight, on the top of the wave, from the beginning. And I was as fresh as they make 'em, and he was mighty nice to me for a while; invited me over to his home and—and introduced me to his sister. Then he got tired of it; saw I was pretty ordinary stuff, couldn't be of any use to him—and that's true enough; so I am. I'm not a clever, brilliant chap like him. He can talk on 'most any subject, he's got a memory that strikes you dizzy!"

"But he went back on you!"

"Sure; and you can bet I didn't trouble him any afterward! I haven't even spoken to him for three years. Though, for that matter, I couldn't have; he wouldn't have given me the chance. But I'm not ashamed of remembering the way I used to feel toward him; in fact, I'd be ashamed if I didn't! That's where the self-respect comes

in. I couldn't be playing square with myself if I forgot all that. Once he was my friend; very well, I can't go back on that, can I? If I could do anything for him I'd do it like a shot; not for myself, not exactly for him, but for a friendship that, once, he did take when I offered it."

"Well," said Phil, "that's what I'll call sentimentality. We shall be in a nice mess if, as soon as I get over it, you fall into it! You'll be misunderstood and make a silly ass of yourself and have only yourself to thank for it!"

"Maybe. But you and I aren't in the same boat as regards this. If he has been drinking, I—I know what that means. And I know what it'll mean to his mother and sister if these stories aren't nailed and stopped. I've got to sit in, provided I can get a chance."

"But, Dick, we can't do anything——"

"I'm not so sure. The first thing we can do is to find out how much there really is behind all this gossip and fool talk. I'm not going to ask any of the fellows about it, either. We'll go over and talk with Doc. Barrett; he's known him ever since he was a kid. I want to see Barrett about something else, anyway. Come on; we'll go now."

"It's not likely that an instructor will say much to undergraduates on this kind of a subject, Dick. Especially to us, after what happened up here last month."

"You never can tell what they'll say if you strike 'em right," replied Dick. "Profs and instructors are queer cattle. Anyhow, he'll talk to me. Come on."

Percy suspected their errand when he saw them at his door, for Jack had stopped him on the street, that morning, to say a hurried and indignant word about the "libel" on Francis that had started at the last night's meeting. He was rather cynically interested as to what the attitude of these particular boys might be. Nothing that Dick thought or did could amaze him any longer; it was impossible to predict what a boy who was so indifferent to convention, once he got started, might do or say. One thing, however, was certain, he would keep his hands absolutely off it! He

didn't propose to be burned twice in the same place. Was it not just like a boy's inconsistency, that, having resented his interference in their affairs, these lads should now turn to him to talk over someone else's?

Dick wasted no words in beginning:

"Dr. Barrett, there are queer stories about Morland's drinking going round college. The fellows seem to be believing them. If he isn't careful they'll put him on the blink for Class Day. I want to find out if they're true. I know it's more or less irregular to be asking you anything about it, but what of it? You know him and you'll treat him square, and I'm here because I want to stand by him. Of course, you know I wouldn't be asking if that weren't so."

"Stand by him?" said Percy. "Are you seeing anything of Morland now?"

"Oh, no," said Dick. "What I mean is that if he's in trouble I'd like to be of use to him."

"H-m," said Percy vaguely, "I see." (He didn't; what in the world did Blaisdell mean or what could he do?) "I don't know whether there's any truth in these rumors or not. So I can't help you any."

"But, sir," said Phil, "we had a talk about Morland once and you called him 'a taster of emotions'; what did you mean by it? D'you think he's really going down hill?"

"One doesn't think anything in a case like the present," said Percy coldly. "I know nothing about it. There are no facts to go upon."

"Well," continued Phil, "I think I've got what may be one. You know that shop on Tremont Street, just opposite the Park Street Church, 'Cushing's, where they sell the stuff for men to take home?"

"Yes."

"I saw him in there about ten days ago. I'd just been to see the oculist about my eyes, that man in the Paddock Building. Morland was just coming out of Cushing's as I came along the street."

"What of it?" said Percy still more coldly. "Any man's a right to buy liquor at Cushing's if he chooses."

"But," said Phil, "I saw a lot of him up to the Mid-Years. He certainly used to look awfully seedy at times, absolutely fagged out of a morning and nervously all to pieces."

Percy moved uncomfortably in his seat. He remembered the afternoon he had met Morland standing before the door of the Porcellian.

"If any one really thinks he's in trouble there should be no talking about it and no surmising. The only thing to be done would be to go to him frankly and tell him what's being said and give him his chance to meet it. I said that to his cousin this morning and I think Trowbridge is going to do it."

"Exactly," said Dick. "We've got to stop talking behind his back. That won't get us anywhere. Though, for that matter, I'm pretty sure that there's something wrong. I wasn't going to say so, but I was sure of it last night. I know Francis; there isn't anything—anything of what you'd call 'conscience' in him to hold him back once he got started. I'm going over to see him."

For a moment Percy was startled off guard.

"You! That's out of the question. The only person who can talk with him, or ought to, is Trowbridge. He wouldn't receive you!"

"Yes, he would," said Dick. "It isn't any use to send Jack to him; he'll just lie. Perhaps he won't want to receive me, but he will."

"But even if you do go and if you really manage to see him," said Percy, "it wouldn't accomplish anything. He would most justifiably resent it. Really, if you came here for my opinion I should say most decidedly that it's none of your business. Drop the whole matter. Keep quiet, but keep out of it."

"I think it is my business," said Dick, "and if he's in bad I'll know it, all right. I don't believe, especially in this

matter," he said, flushing a little, "that any one could bluff me."

"But," said Percy, "that's just the reason! He'd terribly resent any advice or suggestions from you, or from any other man, for that matter. But after what's happened between you and him I think it's fantastic, impossible, for you to concern yourself with it."

"Fellows have been told lots of times that things were impossible, but they've done them," said Dick. "Besides," he added, a little impatiently, "I'm not going to give him any advice; I'm not in that business. But don't you see, just because I've been through this mill myself and used to know him, it's up to me to try to help him out of it if he's got into it?" Then he looked at Percy very steadily. "I shall go to see him to-night. I'm going to take my chance."

"To take my chance." Percy remembered that phrase. His grasp on the paper cutter tightened; his eyes, narrowed and steely, gave no sign.

"There's nothing more for me to say, is there? I'm sorry to ask you to excuse me, but I have a good deal, just now, on my hands."

He shut the door on their retreating backs, a passion of protest, jealousy, almost despair, rising in his heart. Why was it that he could neither ignore nor explain that inner world from which, now and again, Blaisdell issued, armed with ideas and purposes which seemed to him equally incomprehensible and illogical, but against which he could make no headway. It was that which so irritated him; he could neither believe in, nor yet refute, what the boy was so sure of. Here was Blaisdell about to attempt the very thing he had so resented in another. Did anyone ever really learn from observation of others' experiences! Was it, after all, the Lord of Mis-rule that presided over the affairs of men?

But far deeper than that was the rebellion against the power to achieve their will, to get things done, which this type of man possessed. What right had an orderly universe

to let these men compass their purposes and desires when they went at them ignoring the regular processes of the analyzing and reflective life? Dick's steady voice, "I'm going to take my chance," sounded in his ears, fell like the striking of a hammer on his heart. It seemed to crystallize his inner life, pitilessly revealing whatever hopes and fears, whatever doubts and half-defined perceptions had been accumulating within him. He thought of what a lover, imperious and compelling, the lad would make. It was as if, with an unwonted flash of imagination, he could see him, tempering strength with gentleness, glorifying every accent with the supreme emotion of his tenderness and making it invincible with the unquestioning faith of his desire.

He had been seeing much of Felicia these last few weeks. They went to plays together, and had luncheon from time to time in town. He could make nothing of her. She seemed to have deflected that inner life of hers to some new interest; was half amused, half irritated when Dick's name came up, was extremely friendly and equally impersonal with him. She was getting interested in kindergarten and thought that, perhaps next winter, she would go to Miss Wheelock for a course. Wouldn't it be fine to have a class right there in the old house with those tenement children? Perhaps she might combine that with settlement-house work. He had never seen her more restless, her mind ranging more inconsequently from topic to topic and from plan to plan. But underneath he had the feeling in his heart that she was accepting him as a pleasant appanage, quite content to let things go on just as they were, and that toward Dick in some way not quite clear to him her feelings were being changed. On the whole, he had been encouraged as he had sensed that changing attitude; but, for the moment, still under the impression of the boy's strength and directness, he was carried out of himself by the sense of helplessness, of being unable to thwart such crude, if virile, power.

Then he pulled himself together and sat down to face the situation. And, as he began that self-imposed review,

he knew he had never been more miserable nor downhearted, never so near to self-distrust and cynical contempt of his own soul, as he was now. For he was deep wounded in his pride, that pride which hitherto had been the defensive armor of his life. He had long held himself to be one above the common run of men, set apart by the distinctions of his intellect. The sturdy, practical interests of his unreflective mates were not his; he had been willing to ignore their obvious lives and indifferent in his turn when they had glanced at his pale scholasticism askance. He had been able to accept his unpopularity with such as these, had never really doubted that true success was his, not theirs. But now, in this prime and essential thing by which all youth rates the strength or weakness of its kind, this winning and holding of his chosen mate, he had tried, had done his utmost, and so far it had been to fail. To acknowledge that he was vanquished in his love, the chief essay of his life, brought something more than the poignant bitterness of rejected offerings, the inner sorrow at the withheld completion of his life. It also brought the hint of insufficiency of personality, of some essential lack in him of robust and conquering manhood, a tormenting thought indeed to this trim young man. Entrenched behind his learning and his books he had despised these crude and elemental chaps, cared little for their admiration or their faith, been not unwilling to be distrusted and under-rated by the unthinking throng; but now was he to be outstripped by them in this, the essential race of all? The one whom he confessed to be wholly desirable and fair, would she pass by such gifts and homage as he had to bring, for theirs? He was very near to fierce rebellion and terrified bewilderment at that thought; it threatened to lay not only his cool pride, but also his self-faith prostrate in the dust. He struck the table, in the silence, with his fist.

"I shall never give up! I shall go and get from her a definite answer."

He was consumed with restlessness. He felt like one

imprisoned. The room seemed still to be filled with the presence of that eager, forward-pushing youth. He rose and threw up a window that the swift inrush of the outer air might dispel all traces of that lingering atmosphere, free him from the almost intolerable vestiges of Blaisdell's abundant, resolute life. "He's not extraordinarily able," he thought. "It isn't as though he were a boy of really fine perceptions. It's just that crude moral energy in him. God! Life's not fair!"

But he understood and despised the weakness of that cry, and, almost at once, he set his mind and will against it. Indeed, could he have truly seen himself at that moment, he would have known that he had never been so much a man as on that waning afternoon. Above the disorder of his books and papers, against the negligible and neutral background of his rooms, his face stood out resolute and grim, a strain of fineness in its deepening lines that had not shown before. Again, the will to meet and face reality gleamed in his steady eye. He would not hide uncertainly in the shadows, nor fumble with his life or fate. He loved and served the Truth, and in that hour, which, up to then, had been perhaps the hardest hour of his life, he looked for no evasions. He would have scorned the easy lie; straight thinking was never more precious nor desirable in his eyes than now, although he feared to guess where straight thinking might lead him or what demands upon him it might make.

There was suffering in the depths of the gray eyes as he sat long before his unheeded books that dimming afternoon. He seemed to have grown older as the darkness gathered about him. His mind had become very busy with the past. All the events of his Cambridge life in those last eight years rose up panorama-like before him. Old names and faces sprang from the depths of buried memories, forgotten childish joys or little sorrows thrilled or throbbed again each for its instant in his heart. But when that long retrospect was over and memory had led him back to the

threshold of the present hour, another decision had been made. He knew that as regards Cambridge and its life the time had come to say farewell.

"I've held off Van Buren long enough. I've not taken that offer on its merits; I've been compromising with it, holding it over her, using a serious, professional invitation for my personal affairs. I'll make an end of that. Next time I see her I shall tell her not that I might or might not go, but that I am going. And then she must face the facts, too. Perhaps that will reveal to her whether she really wants to go with me or not."

He avoided his dining club that night, and when he came back from town, about half-past eight, he wrote two letters. One was to the head of his department, saying that he thought eight continuous years in Cambridge, as both student and instructor, had been enough. There was some danger of going stale in the over-familiar life, and another year, regretfully, he meant to strike out for fresh woods and pastures new. The other was to the president of the university at Van Buren. It contained his final and brief acceptance of the assistant-professorship which had been offered him.

He took the letters out to the mail-box, opened wide the slot, held them over it for a moment, dropped them in. Something like a sob rose in his throat as the iron lid fell shut and the missives were forever out of his keeping. He walked up to the Square, trembling a little, entered the cool and silent Yard and stood at the corner of Gray's looking down toward University and Thayer. Over the dim outlines of the ancient buildings and along the crossing and recrossing paths his eyes traveled. He was soon to see it no more; it seemed hard to believe that his turn had come to be gone. Harvard was always sending out her young instructors; she would not let them stay. He realized now what a passion of loyalty and pride they carried with them as they left their austere Mother. They recognized that it was part of her impersonal consecration to the goal of

scholarship, part of her transmitted obedience to the truth, that made her thrust them out and bid them be able and ready to depart. There must be no lingering by the sons of her high spirit in smooth waters, no hugging the shallow shores of their earlier, easier life. They could serve her only as they worked out their own destiny by her standards, in her spirit, when they, too, launched out into the deep!

Finally, he returned to his dull rooms determined that he would work, work as well and as usual that night, and a long and laborious evening he spent on the brochure. Two paragraphs, clear and trenchant, were finished at the end. He looked them over, a wry smile twisting his face. How much better he was writing than at the beginning of the year! Now that he cared nothing for the moment, less than nothing about it all—now that his attitude toward it was remote and impersonal, indeed, the work was proceeding with a clearness and authority it had never shown before.

He put away his books and prepared for bed. He was white and a little strained; he looked as young trees, buffeted by the wind, sometimes look, a little maimed and twisted, as he climbed between the sheets. He reached out his hand to put out the light and lay down again with his face to the wall.

"It will be all right. I shan't mind going too much. If only I don't have to go alone."

XXII

EARLY that evening Jack went around to Francis' rooms in Claverly. He did not relish the approaching interview, neither did it ever occur to him to evade it.

"How well do you know that chap, Kulmer?" he asked, directly he was seated.

"The Yard man who ran against me for the marshalship?" inquired Francis indifferently. "Can't say I've ever cultivated him."

"He's got an awful scunner against you. In fact, I came round to tell you about it. Got off some damned personal remarks last night, not coming out in the open like a gentleman, just hinting at God knows what! And some of the fellows were lapping up all he'd feed to 'em and then spreading it about, afterward. It strikes me we'd better tackle him, bring him right down to brass tacks till he crawls and then make him apologize. That lad needs to be shown where he gets off."

Morland appeared absorbed in the cigarette which he was rolling with elaborate care.

"Rather sudden, all this, isn't it?" he said lightly. "I hadn't seemed to realize I was so deucedly unpopular with the class. What are Kulmer and his crowd saying?"

Trowbridge was moving uneasily about the room. An aggressive, vigorous youth himself, of unconscious wholesomeness of mind and spirit, he had no dimmest insight into the workings of such personalities as Morland's. But, like all men of his type, he had the clannish instinct. He and Francis were cousins, they must naturally stand together, owning the bond of their common house and protecting its tradition. One did not talk of these things, they

were understood and taken for granted. That he should support Francis, therefore, when his reputation was being challenged, went without saying.

Yet he was distinctly uncomfortable and more or less aware that he was moving about in worlds not realized. Something of that inhibitory self-consciousness, which not infrequently exists between near blood relations, had been growing between him and Morland of late. As little lads they had played together in true primitive fashion; at school their careless and familiar intercourse, reinforced by a hundred common associations and memories, had continued of its own momentum. But in college, while they were both Porcellians and had remained in fairly frequent external association, they had actually grown quite apart. Jack knew next to nothing of the real, the underlying Francis. Like dwellers in a city block, who are unknown even by name to those next door, the blank party wall dividing them more effectively than strips of lawn and shrubbery in more open localities might do, so Jack and Francis, brought up side by side under the one roof-tree, were cut asunder by that most impassable of all barriers, the dead wall of different types of personalities, different instincts, standards, ambitions.

And Jack was really worried. He refused even for a moment to believe the stories; it would have seemed disloyal, and, besides, Francis drank temperately and indifferently at the club. But his cousin was a sealed book to him, and struggling of late with the accepted cousinly attitude of general respect and liking had been a sort of instinctive questioning and faint repulsion. He knew of nothing that might cause it, but that was the very fact which of late had thrust itself forward in his consciousness. How curious that of Francis' inner life and habits he should know nothing! Of a sudden he found himself face to face with mystery; it repelled and troubled him. Meanwhile, there was that light and apparently careless question, "What have they been saying?" and, somehow, it must be answered.

"Oh, some old tabbies must have been talking about you. I say, what strong stuff you smoke; I'll bet those cigarettes are doped! You know what a place the Yard is for gossip once it gets started. Well, some silly ass has been saying that you drink a lot and—and get soused on the quiet. Some one ought to get hold of those fellows that hinted it at the Cercle meeting and spread it about afterward, and give them what-for! Perhaps our cue is to ignore it, treat it as beneath contempt. Only, I say, Francis, I wish you'd get out among the fellows more. Don't seem to be keeping yourself shut up here if you can help it. It looks as if the college had just waked up to the fact that no one seems to see much of you nowadays, and that it's sort of mysterious and curious, and it's got on their nerves."

"So that's it," said Francis, watching the drifting smoke of his cigarette. "So that's it," he repeated, a slow smile curling the edges of his lips. "I take it the dear class wants more of a mixer, would like to see me 'standing up' a little oftener with the boys? I might treat that nice little debating club, 'The Senior Wranglers,' to ice-cream sodas, or take The Christian Association cabinet over to Rammy's and have Lucy feed them up on cakes and syrup at the naughty hour of half-past ten some evening? Then we might know our dear classmate better before we honor him by finally placing the laurel on his brow!" The lazy, insolent voice ceased, the cynical smile still curled the edges of his lips; he got suddenly to his feet. "Well, I won't do it," he said savagely. "The damned insolent beggars! I'll not truckle to them! They can go to hell!"

"I say, Francis," interposed Jack with uncomfortable distaste, "ease up a bit on the language! Really, you've got to make them see it's all rot. We don't want our people to hear of it!"

Francis flushed darkly.

"Thanks awfully, Jack," he retorted. "Don't lose too much sleep over the reputation of the family; I guess, be-

tween us, we can take care of it! There's always you to fall back on! And don't worry over me, either; I rather think I can still paddle my own canoe. But you needn't think I'm going to begin now to kowtow to hoi polloi, no matter what dirty lies they tell!"

"All right," said Jack stiffly. "I'm off. But I thought you ought to be told. I'd certainly have an understanding with Kulmer, if I were you. So long!"

But Morland paid no attention to his cousin's final sentences. All he wanted was to get him out of the room, to have him gone. He swung to the door behind the departing figure, absorbed in his self-protective anger, without a thought of bolting it or even noticing if it were securely latched. His one desire, the only thing he could think of, was to be alone, to get away from Jack or anybody else and try to adjust his startled senses to this new and unexpected situation.

His first reaction was one of indignant incredulity. It seemed impossible that such a thing should really happen to him, incredible that he should actually be attacked. His mind balked at the idea that the poisoned shafts of comment and evil suspicion were levelled against his person, that he too might experience that lowering of his good name which, with a half-fearful interest, he had seen come to others. He refused to believe it; that seemed at first the easiest way to take it; ostrich-like to bury his head in the sands of indignant denial, of stubborn unbelief. Jack need not have been such a solemn ass, nor made such a fuss. It really amounted to nothing! All he needed was to arrogantly or indifferently face it down; if necessary, laugh or ridicule it out of existence. What did the innuendoes of a few nonentities amount to! Yet he was filled with an intense and concentrated anger as he thought of them. If only he could lay his hands on those nonentities!

But behind that arrogant bravado and cruel wrath was foreboding and a pitiable moral cowardice. Francis was frightened, and pushed his rage and insolence to the front to

hide his fear. He knew only one world, the pasteboard sham of the externals; his reputation, pleasure, popularity. He had no inner resources except a stubborn, flaccid will and the shrewdness of his dark and subtle spirit. Fierce gusts of nervous energy, the bitter flare-up of an arbitrary temper, a carefully cultivated charm,—these had carried him far, given him his pleasurable way and the appearance of stability and power. But his spirit crumbled before this first serious attack upon him. Temper took the place of resolution; he stormed against these men who dared oppose him, who, just as he was about to step upon the summit of undergraduate success, were trying to shatter his gilded makeshift of a world. He could not, would not explain, deny, defend; no, never!

Yet always underneath was that chill, crawling line of fear, nor could contemptuous denials nor angry menaces wipe it from his consciousness. Like a disturbing tide it rose within him, making his heart hammer and his mouth go dry. Heavens! He had never dreamed he could be so miserably nervous! But the fibres of resolution, never strong in him, were lax and broken with these last months of self-indulgence. He was not of the stuff that bears it out even to the edge of doom. "To go down scornful before many spears" was a pretty phrase, but when the sharp points were pricking, pushing at your frail house of cards and there was nothing much behind that gaudy barrier except miserable fear, insolent pretense and dubious delights, ah, then it was another matter! For a while that panic, which he could no longer deny, had its way with him, exaggerating his danger; he began to see the fingers of the man's hand that wrote over against the wall.

Then the distilled intensity of the self-protective strain in him began to operate, his real persistency of will, perverted into tenacious pride in place, jealous hold on privilege and power. Some latent inheritance of courage—not the valor which is frank and free, but that hardihood which, subtle and indirect, is a sort of courage, still—began to steady

nerves and temper. He could not fight man-fashion, face forward, ready to fall, if need be, like a man, but neither would he collapse like a pricked bubble. So, like a cornered animal, his spirit bared its teeth, twisting and turning, contriving its escape. Kulmer could be pacified; all he needed was a little "handling"; Francis understood that task, instantly brushing aside any scruples as to the nature of the price that "handling" calls for. He would ask Kulmer to his rooms, play up to him, bring it about that he could suggest that he'd like to do the civil to Kulmer's guests on Class-Day. If, for the moment, he could thus quell this talk, what mattered it? Those social standards which he so carefully guarded, were little in themselves to him except as they ministered to his place and power.

He was feeling easier now, his mind reacting from its first exaggeration of his predicament into thinking lightly of it. That was out of the way; he could sink back into comfortable enjoyment again. Should he go to the club, to-night? That would be good tactics, but, no, not to-night—to-morrow; he would stay in this evening. But he could not write nor settle to his books, it was not yet nine, his relaxed spirit craved some immediate distraction which should absorb and gratify him.

And so he turned, or, rather, found that he was turned, to what was habitual and most readily accessible; and, again, a certain lure in recklessness seemed to certify to his security and strength. Once more the currents of the will were flowing silently down the deepest ploughed of the channels in his brain. He crossed the room, standing before his little library, the expression of brooding melancholy, the fated look, deep, now, within his eyes. He had no conscious perception of bringing the novella, the decanters and the glasses, over to the stand beside his easy-chair. Even yet there arose, from time to time, that inward anxiety and restlessness, but an outward stillness had fallen upon him as though he were beginning to come, once more, under some familiar spell. Half mechanically he sank into his seat; he was like

one moved from without, no longer his own master, safe in slavery. And, as his mind became absorbed in the closely printed pages and the slow warmth of the amber spirit began to rise, with delicious sharpness, in his veins, so the last of that other, inner tumult appeared to quell and die away.

But at about half-past nine there came a knock, an unfamiliar but hearty and resolute knock upon the door. Francis started at it; the unexpected shock brought all the early foreboding of the evening flooding over him again. He realized acutely how miserable and nervous he still was. He had forgotten about his bolt, but he had no doubt he had shot it; he sat perfectly quiet. In a moment the intruder, finding no response, would go away. Of course, the door was fastened? If not, the unknown visitor, seeing the light beneath the letter-slot might try to enter either to await his return or to call through into the inner room. He knew the easy college convention in these matters. But, of course, the door was fastened.

The knock sounded again, more insistent than before. He sat rigid, his hand closed nervously on his book. He could not precisely remember as to the door; but it must be locked. No; it was not locked. It was opening; some one was coming in.

He swung sharply round in his seat as though he would put himself between the newcomer and the stand with the decanter and the glasses. He let the book slip from his fingers into the hollow between his person and the arm of his chair. Then quite suddenly he stood up. Just inside the door and close beside it was Richard Blaisdell. Francis' first emotion was one of bewildering, almost paralyzing astonishment. This man with whom long ago he had broken all connection, but whose name and personality had seemed to haunt him all this final year, with whom everyone seemed to have conspired to vex and plague him—that he should suddenly appear standing within his room that night, of all nights, seemed almost beyond belief.

"Hello, Francis," said Dick simply. "Say, I want most sincerely——"

At the frank and unstudied ease of that address again Morland felt himself the victim of some hallucination. It was unbelievable that Richard Blaisdell was standing there in his room and talking in that even, natural tone, with no sense of embarrassment or anything unusual in his voice or manner. There was nothing of Francis' customary attitude of ready comprehension and faintly patronizing grace in his appearance now. He glared at Blaisdell, speechless, jaw thrust out, with no comprehension of what his presence might portend. But he knew this was not a dream, for he heard it—that natural, steady voice. It was going on:

" . . . sincerely to apologize for butting in this way. The door was barely shut and I saw the light and took it you had just run out and were coming back. Didn't occur to me that you might be in here all the time and not want to be disturbed. So say the word and I'll get out."

Morland had a moment to get himself somewhat together and to think as that frank address went on. Everything in him was on the defensive now. Again he felt at bay, and a cold and rising anger, something, too, of exasperated fear, were mingling with his bewilderment. What consummate cheek the fellow had to be standing so quietly there. Was there ever anything to equal this for pushing in where you weren't wanted? Why, he had not even spoken to or recognized the chap for three years! But a sense of caution and something very near dismay mingled with that disdain, forbidding its immediate expression and bringing his mind again into a strange confusion. He didn't quite dare to "say the word" and let Blaisdell get out. He wanted to; he would have liked to strike out cruelly at anything that night, and particularly at this lad. But here was a Yard man; more than that, one whom he had once called his friend, but afterwards injured and ignored, one who certainly had no cause to stand by him. And here were the glasses and decanters, placed so close beside the easy chair, which might carry their

own inference to those steady eyes. He had no relish in the thought of fresh material for rumor being added, at this juncture, to his affairs. No; he did not dare tell him to go until first, at least, he had discovered what he was there for and what use, if any, he meant to make of the information which that unheralded entrance had brought.

"Why, it's Dick Blaisdell!" he cried brightly. "No, no! Don't go!" His mouth was rather dry and his tongue seemed thick and stiff. He wondered if Blaisdell would notice how hard it was to articulate his words. He pushed himself and went on rather jerkily. "You can't imagine I'd send a man off I hadn't seen in all these years, let him slip away the moment he arrives! I was just a bit surprised, that's all! I'm sure I don't know why, I suppose just the suddenness of it." He pulled forward a chair with nervous haste. What had possessed him to refer to that long estrangement? Was there ever such a maladroit remark! "Do sit down," he concluded nervously. "What will you smoke? Sit down!"

"Thank you," said Dick simply, "I think I won't smoke to-night, but I'd like to stay awhile." He sat down.

His continued quietness and assurance were inexplicable to Francis. Had the man no pride? Blaisdell was comparatively at his ease; there was an extraordinary nobleness and gentleness of approach about his demeanor. He wasn't at all embarrassed, nor particularly self-conscious. Indeed, it was his naturalness that fairly terrified Francis. There was something in those steady eyes, the definiteness, the straightforwardness of them, before which Morland was dumb. But he resented this calm assumption of equality. That was not like the old days! Wait till he found out just where he was with Blaisdell, then he would strike! If he only knew what he was come for, or if only the bottles and the glasses were back in their accustomed place! Still, he could brave it out and anything was better than blind fencing and suspense. He summoned all that he could command of his old, easy air.

"Lucky you aren't a freshman," he laughed softly. "Might frighten you to see such shocking evidences of dissipation!"

"Yes," said Dick quietly, "right you are. As I recall our first year here I'm glad myself I'm not a freshman."

In spite of himself Morland blushed at that. What was the matter with him to-night! Again he had said just the wrong thing. Every word he uttered seemed a boomerang. Was there no way of getting under this man's skin?

"One's classmates are a different story, of course," he went on boldly. "At least I fancy you, anyway, know how much, or how little, this sort of thing means, eh? Still, one can quite understand that it isn't every man whom you would like to have surprise you, so to speak, right in the very act. Not quite the thing just now, for instance, that I should like to have shouted from the housetops! But, of course, you're——"

Dick looked up very steadily at him.

"You don't mean by that," said he, "that you think I'm some sort of a Committee of Investigation, do you?"

"No, no! Why, of course not!" said Francis hastily. "It was banal in me even to have seemed to hint it. I think I must be off my head to-night. Really, I never dreamed of such a thing! Not that it matters anyway, only——"

"I thought you couldn't mean that," said Dick. "I don't wonder," he continued pleasantly, "you were surprised to see me. It's quite a while since we've got together, naturally it rather pulled you up to see me suddenly standing inside your door. I certainly didn't mean," he laughed rather uncomfortably, the first traces of embarrassment showing in his voice and manner, "to make such a stagey entrance. Far from it; the drama isn't in my line! But I thought you couldn't believe, no matter how I happened in here, that I'm the sort to tell outside a man's room what was only meant to be seen inside it!" He got up and walked across the study, securely closing the door. "No use having anybody else but-

ting in here just now," he remarked cheerfully as he came back.

Francis winced a little at those words, "just now." They deepened his foreboding and hence the resentment that was surging within him.

"I don't quite see that it really matters," he said unevenly. "But, by all means, do as you like about it."

"Say," said Dick, settling himself comfortably in his chair, "speaking of the drama, do you remember that Wednesday evening, the week before Thanksgiving three years ago, when we went into the Hollis together to see Olga Nethersole in *Camille?* And how we sat up on the window seat in your room and talked about it afterward till three in the morning? You meant a good deal to me then," said Dick a little stiffly, his voice changing. "One reason why I'm up here is to tell you that. There's something coming to you from me for the good time I had those first months. If it ever happens you want anything I can give I'm on deck. You—you needn't forget that you can call on me."

There was a sort of frank expectancy, something quite openly persuasive in Dick's voice as he repeated these last phrases. It was as though he were deliberately offering Francis an opening with the frank expectation that he would respond to it and let him in a little at this obvious crisis of his undergraduate life. But Morland misconstrued the spirit of that offer of support, such magnanimous if quixotic loyalty lay quite beyond his horizon. He did think he was getting some light at last, however, on the situation, that he knew now where he stood. Behind this inexplicable intrusion there was apparently nothing but sentimentality on Blaisdell's part, the usual "dear old college days" sort of stuff. He had come in moved by a sort of romantic impulse to try to renew old ties before Commencement Day should "sever them forever." His sense of fear began to go; he had at once taken Dick's ready and indignant pledge of silence at its face value. As for this half-wistful recalling of those

early months of their freshman year Francis cordially despised him for it. So no matter what had been seen or surmised that night he was harmless enough; the thing to do was promptly and superiorily to get rid of him; he would decidedly enjoy doing that. He only wished he had played a bolder hand from the beginning.

"My dear fellow," he drawled, "don't speak of gratitude to me. I dare say you gave me not a few pleasant moments when we were both in our green and salad days. I don't seem to remember much about it, but doubtless we're quits on that score. It would be pleasant, perhaps, to take up the old threads again if one had time to recall all the things which are past and gone. But I've a whole raft of work to get off; I dare say you have, too. So one is thankful whenever one can to get an uninterrupted evening. At the best I don't know how I'll pull through all my work before the finals!"

Dick had flushed a deep and painful red under the suave discourtesy of that speech. There was evidently a moment when he fiercely regretted that he had put himself in the place where he had no choice but to listen to it. Nevertheless, when he replied, while there was grimness now in his tone, it was still with an unruffled confidence.

"Sure thing; I know all about it. Got two make-ups thrown in for luck as well! I wouldn't feel that I could stay at all only," glancing pleasantly at the stand with its glasses, "I see you're not working to-night. Besides, there are one or two things that I want to say before I go."

XXIII

THEN Francis knew that it was coming; that some purpose, undisclosed as yet, lay behind Dick's being in his rooms, that night. He had already experienced the crude force which lay behind that direct speech, those steady eyes, felt the moral purpose of this new Blaisdell who confused him because he was so like, yet so totally unlike, the boy he once had known. Nor did that strain of what was, to him, the incredible naïvete of Dick's attitude escape him. He shrewdly expected sledge-hammer tactics, now; very well, his rapier was ready; he would enjoy, decidedly he would enjoy, using that. A civil insolence crept into his manner, but his eyes were hard and wary, his mouth twisted, under the tension, into a faintly cruel line. Mastering all else in his consciousness was the determination to thrust, and thrust deep, when the chance came. Before the finish of that evening Richard Blaisdell should regret having forced his way into his rooms that night.

"Say, Francis," continued Dick pleasantly, "what's your book?"

There was a slight intake of the other's breath.

"Oh, rather a ripping tale. Might have interested you. But, unhappily, it's in French."

"Just what I've been reading all winter with Doc. Barrett," said Dick. "Let's see it."

He reached down for the paper covered volume. It had fallen to the floor when Morland had suddenly risen at Dick's entrance.

"Let it be," he said suddenly. "I don't know whether I want you to see it."

"Why not?" said Dick. Then he looked up. "It's straight goods, isn't it?"

"Of course!" flared Francis. "What else do you suppose I'd be reading! As a matter of fact, it's superb literature—naturally, therefore, not *'pueris virginibus.'* You're quite welcome to see it, or to borrow it, for that matter—rather fancy you'll want to."

It came over him that he was talking at some length about his reading and with not quite the easy assurance he had intended. He stopped abruptly.

"All right," said Dick. "Let's see it, anyway."

He took up the book, glanced at the title-page and turned over into the first story, stopping for a sentence here and there. Presently a paragraph caught his attention; he read it through slowly and carefully. An utter silence had fallen upon the room. When he had finished the paragraph he looked up. Francis was regarding him coolly, his mouth sneering and a little supercilious.

"Well," he said, "how do you like it?"

"Hot stuff!" said Dick slowly. "The guy who wrote it must have a nice opinion of himself."

"My dear fellow, how delightfully simple! You'll forgive me if I can't help laughing. Have you never read anything of Bandello's before? Distinguished man. He could tell a great tale, full of the real joy of the real world. So you think it off color! Well, evil to him who evil——"

"If you try to kid yourself along with any such dope as that I hope you don't think it will fool me," said Dick calmly. "He may have been a great man, but he was a man with a sick mind and only another mind that was sick could stand for it. Off color? I'll say it is! Sort of stuff we used to read on the sly when we were school-boys. You could get away with it then, but you can't now! We've outgrown that sort of thing."

Francis was negligently rolling a cigarette. He paled with anger at that last sentence; there was a silky quality in his voice.

"Do boys read the novelle for their naughty stories? I

wouldn't have supposed they knew of them. However, you seem to be informed. I'm afraid you couldn't qualify for literary criticism, Blaisdell—moral censorship more in your line, perhaps? There's wit and irony in those tales that some of us delight in; we read them because—you doubtless remember Fielding's phrase—they 'laugh men out of their follies.'"

"I see," said Dick. "That's the effect they have on you?"

"That sounds as though you meant to be offensive," drawled Francis. "Of course you're my guest—at least I seem to be your—involuntary host, but, even so, there are some things that just aren't done, you know."

"Look here," said Dick steadily, "you can put me on the blink, all right, as a word spieler, and you're sore at my being here without even stopping to find out what made me come, and you don't care what ways you take to make me feel it, either. But I'm here to say something and I'm going to do it. You're in trouble with the class. Kulmer's out to get you, if he can, and you won't be able to put anything over on him by smooth talk, you can bet on that! I heard what he said, and, what's more, what he didn't say, but just insinuated, last night, and he's got a damn shrewd suspicion of what's wrong. The boys are getting on to you. There'll be mighty few of 'em that'll shed any tears if they see you down and out, known for what you are, as a rotter. It's Ames and your own bunch, who are talking now! I came round because I wanted to give you a hand up. Well, you can take it or leave it. I'm not so damned anxious to stay, believe me!"

"It is awfully good of you," said Francis, "to offer services before they're asked for, and even where they're not needed. Did you really think Kulmer and his crowd troubled me? I suppose any chap's liable to be slandered, especially if he's envied, but, really, I'm quite competent to handle it. So, if you feel you must go——"

Dick was getting more and more uncomfortable. That

high confidence that had carried him thus far was waning; he began to perceive something that was unreal and indefensible in the adventure of the evening. It made him self-conscious, something of the old truculence came to the surface in him; unconsciously he slipped down into the defensive. Francis was quick to note that change of attitude. He had begun to get Blaisdell into a false position; the anger, which fear and caution had half held back, was straining at its leashes, now. But he was not altogether prepared for the elemental quality in the wrath of an uncomplicated nature, once it is aroused.

"You just stop your bluffing and come down to brass tacks, Francis Morland! If you think I'll let you bawl me out like that, you've got another guess coming! No man can take to drinking on the sly and reading 'literature' as you call it, who isn't on the down grade and traveling fast. For God's sake, buck up and be a man!"

At that last sentence Francis' nerves and temper, strained beyond all endurance, broke. Nothing mattered now but to lash this lad who dared confront him. He sprang to his feet, shaking with hate and anger. His words came rapidly, they poured from him as if he was possessed by his own rage, each one fell clear-cut, as hard as ice from his quivering lips.

"You have consummate nerve, Dick Blaisdell! D'you think you can add insult to impudence and get away with it with me! In what further variety of ways will I have to tell you to leave before you start! A man of decent birth and breeding wouldn't have gone to a place where he had the least suspicion even that he wasn't wanted. I'm rather handicapped," he went on with rising voice and passion, "because, not having your bulk, I can't very well put you out. I suppose I could get Frank up from the office and tell him to land you on the sidewalk, or I might let the fellows across the hall in on this new way of calling on men you don't know and who don't want to know you and reading them a little

lecture on their morals. By George, I'll do that! We could make quite a little story about Dick Blaisdell's breaking into Francis Morland, 2nd's, room—excuse you, you know, by saying that probably, as usual, you weren't quite yourself ——"

"Stop!" cried Dick. "You'll not say that."

"Oh, won't I?" cried the other. "Won't I? Just you see! I'll have them in——"

"I'd move those glasses and bottles first, then."

Morland sprang at him. "Damn you!" he cried.

"You didn't know before how ashamed you were of it, did you? I think I'll apologize for telling you to be a man. Underneath, more or less, I guess you are one. If you weren't you wouldn't want to be killing me now. Usually if a fellow's so far gone as to keep on reading that sort of stuff and you find him out he'll just crawl. You haven't got there yet; that's why it hurts and makes you see red so! But now you know what you are and what you're about, you've come to the end. *You've got to stop now!* If you don't, you're done for. You're not crazy mad at me; you've crazy mad at the sight of your own self, Francis Morland, that what I said made you see." Suddenly Dick took a step forward. "Francis," he cried, "fight! It's your one chance to get free!"

Capacity for speech or emotion were temporarily exhausted in the other. His own violence had numbed him; but out of that momentary impotence he snapped back:

"Damn you, will you let me be! Let me be, I tell you! Will you *get out!*"

But Dick was thoroughly angry, now. It was for the moment a contest of wills into which the evening had degenerated; his half realization of that made him indifferent to any dictates of convention or good breeding; Francis Morland was not going to out-face him!

"No," he said, "I'll not let you be and I'll not get out. Do you think I'd have come up here at all to-night if I

wasn't going to see it through to the end? No; now you've got to face it! You're in hell and don't seem to know it. You don't dare wake up and see yourself for what you are. You just as good as said I wasn't a gentleman. Well, maybe I'm not a gentleman in the sense you're supposed to be. You've got a distinguished ancestry; named, weren't you, for a chief justice of the Supreme Court? You've got a mother—a mother and sister whose lives are high up, whole worlds above the dirty place you live in——"

A sort of terrible rage seemed to take possession of him, his voice shook with the scorn of it; his own eyes were dark with protest and a sturdy indignation. He came close up to the other figure.

"God in Heaven!" he cried. "You've had all this and what have you done with it? You've had all this that some of the rest of us, if it had come our way, might have tried to honor and live up to and pass on, and here you sit and guzzle and feed your mind on smutty stories. You've had all this, Francis Morland, and you turned on me who never harmed you, but who was only such a simp that once I liked you and believed in you, turned on me with language not fit for a cur! See yourself as you are, Francis Morland! God! What sort of a gentleman are you?"

Morland shrank away, silenced and a little frightened. The violence of his rage had ebbed; its staying power quickly expended, only utter exhaustion and a maddening sense of helplessness and a bodily fear in its place. Blaisdell was becoming genuinely formidable to him, his unfaltering will and almost brutal energy confused Francis; the clear comprehension and open contempt in those hot eyes were unbearable to him; his complacent self-esteem, rudely threatened once before that night, began to crumble under it. Like the unexpected falling of a tree which has seemed all vigorous without, but whose heart has long been pervaded with dry rot, so, now, his bravado suddenly collapsed. He himself caved in. His slight pagan life could not endure to be

found out, to be held up to standards whose pitiless reality he feared and hated, to see its pride all trailing in the dust. A new sensation, never before experienced, except on that day, two years before, when he had first begun to purchase the kind of book now lying at Dick's feet—a sensation of inward foreboding and hideous self-distaste—swept over him. A sort of humiliated cry, half anger, half despair, escaped him. "I hate you! You've made me ashamed to-night. Before God, I'll never forgive you for that!" He sank back into his seat, slender fingers went up before his eyes.

But, in the moment when those pale hands lifted, Dick's manner changed. It seemed to shame him to see that crumpled figure in the chair. His own gaze wavered and dropped; a slow flush crept up his cheek. He spoke uncomfortably, stumblingly:

"I—I couldn't have done it if I'd been trying to. You—you know that, don't you?"

"Just the same, you're unjust to me," sobbed the other. "You're all slandering me because you don't know anything about me."

"I guess," said Dick coldly, "we see through some things fast enough."

"That's not so," whimpered Francis. "No one understands me! I never have been understood! I've had to live all my life alone. Every one else of my age liked the things I didn't care about and if I'd let them see what life means to me I'd have been misjudged for it. They're always blaming me at home because I won't go to church with them. But what do I do here? Only yesterday I went around to St. Ignatius' for Benediction. That's what appeals to me! I can feel good there! But let me tell them I am going to church, to a Catholic church, and what would I get? And now all the men are down on me becuase I drink—drink a little—by myself, instead of toping at some bar, as they do! And because I read Bandello, as all the

wits and humanists have done, if they find it out, they call it smutty stories! Oh! If a man's only coarse or dull or brutal, it's all right, and you'll call his conventionality 'character' and his stupidity 'morality'! But because I've had the courage to strike out for myself and worship beauty and strive for it, you all turn on me! I'm not what you think I am! I'm not! I'm not!"

"That's all right," said Dick non-committally. "If you're really being misunderstood, you know why. It won't be hard, then, to stop the thing that's causing it."

"I've told you that I don't know what you're talking about," repeated Francis. "We're two different kinds of people, that's all there is to it. And so I'll have to stand it now from you, just as I shall, all the rest of my life, from the others!"

"Oh, no, we aren't, either!" replied Dick impatiently. "What earthly use is there trying to bluff about that now? You've got to get yourself together and cut out this whole business that I've happened in on to-night. The worst of it's over, anyway. You aren't so awfully fond of drink and hectic 'literature.' I believe you when you say that. What you were fond of was the doing it all by yourself and the thought of no one's knowing. Well, that's done; it's over; it's just smashed, you see, forever. You can't do it any more because you know that I know about it and now you've got to let the sunshine into the whole business, let the fresh air and the light just drench this place and the west wind blow through it. If you want to start that game again you say to yourself, 'I can't; Blaisdell knows and I myself know just what it means. I can't do it any more.' You can break that chain to-night because when you made it you didn't really know what you were about; but now you do know you can't ever link it up again. If you do that, you'll be a goner!"

The passing of the open contempt in Blaisdell's voice was all that mattered to Morland for the moment. He would willingly do anything, say almost anything, for the rest of

that evening merely to regain his own self-esteem by some restating of himself in the eyes of that other.

What can any man do when he's so misunderstood and misjudged, except ignore it, live it down!"

"You can chuck these bottles into the ash-can, that's one thing," said Dick a little breathlessly. "I hate the smell of them!"

Francis noticed that his hand had begun faintly to tremble. It was Dick's first sign of weakness that night; it helped amazingly to make his own situation less intolerable.

"Very well, I will," he said with some dignity. He carried the decanter into his bathroom; when he came back he looked at Dick. "Well," he said, hardily if a little shamefacedly, "that's done."

"Now we'll get down to business," said Dick grimly. "You'll never really turn round in your tracks until you let some one else in on this. Besides, you've got to do that, so that the men'll know that there's nothing any more being hidden up here. You've been living here lately, one of the most envied and one of the most lonely men in college, and the inside of you is unhealthy and shut up like a damp cellar, and the boys have got onto it. Now you've got to get out where things are hearty and have some punch to 'em, and be among chaps that aren't too nice and squeamish. Fellows that'll biff you in the jaw and kick you in the stomach if you don't drop your side and cheek and this baby-blue æsthetic stuff and get down to brass tacks! You chum round with Jack, box with him, get out on hikes, put yourself in a sweat at the gym afternoons. Then if you grit your teeth and keep at it you'll win out. I know," he added wearily, "I've been through it. But don't try to go it alone. Let Trowbridge in on it."

Francis gazed speculatively at him. He was subdued enough now in manner and not ungracious, but there was no real yielding in him. Perhaps what he was most conscious of at the moment was a frank and impersonal curiosity, as if he were dealing with some sort of an incomprehensible being.

He was not unwilling to profit by Dick's generosity, if he could use it to still these rumors, and he was extremely eager to reinstate himself in Dick's good opinion. Also he was beginning to enjoy his new rôle of magnanimous and injured penitence. It helped his shattered self-esteem to keep it up.

"I dare say I—I seemed to act rather shabbily toward you freshman year. It's rather late in the day, but I'll gladly apologize for that."

"You don't need to," said Dick evenly. "I'd rather you'd forget it. I don't feel toward you as I did then," he continued bluntly. "You'd neither want nor expect it. In a sense what I'm up here for to-night is myself, the boy I used to be. He thought an awful lot of you. I'm not ashamed to tell it, though perhaps you're ashamed to hear it. I'm not going back on that boy whether you did or not."

"Still," said Francis, yet trying to be noble but feeling more uncomfortable, "I should like to say that I appreciate your coming here to-night. I'm not much used to eating humble pie, but I wouldn't have believed that there was a living human being who would or could——"

"No one wants you to eat humble pie," broke in Dick. "Can't you understand that! I didn't come up here to say, 'Be good, you naughty boy. Be like me; be good.' I'd kick myself all round the block before I'd try any fake stuff like that. We're on the level. All I want to know is, are you going to brace up, and buck the line now, and buck it hard?"

The pale youth shivered.

"There really isn't much use in our trying to understand each other. If there were, you'd know it's unnecessary and rather—rather ludicrous to say that sort of thing to me. But I'm perfectly willing to tell you, not to defend myself, but because I appreciate your motive, anyway, in coming here, that, while I've never drunk much, I'm likely to drink even less in the future. Just now," he added rather strangely, "it rather nauseates me. I don't feel as if I could ever touch another drop without being deathly sick."

"And you'll let Trowbridge in on this, won't you? In this sort of thing you can't go it alone."

Francis looked at him amusedly.

"No; I certainly will not. Nothing could induce me to tell my cousin, or anyone else, for that matter. I should think you'd have known that! Besides, it's entirely unnecessary, I tell you."

A little pause. Finally Dick said, rather uncomfortably: "There's another meeting of the Cercle next Friday. You going to be there?"

"I suppose so," said Francis uncertainly.

"Well, I'll see that Kulmer's there, too. I know him pretty well and I'm going to have a talk with him. If he apologizes for some pretty irresponsible talking—and I think he ought to do that—it'll end the matter. But if I ask him to, it will be because I believe, and shall have told him that I believe, that whatever may or may not have been true in the past, you're on the level to-day." He looked very steadily at Morland. "Can I say that?"

"I don't grant that I haven't always been on the level," said Morland loftily. "Of course you can say it. I won't say," he added faintly, "that I haven't carried the drinking a little further than I meant to, but I certainly shan't be doing that again." He didn't look at Dick.

"Well, then," said Dick, "I guess I'll say good-bye."

Francis held out his hand, as though with frank and easy cordiality. Dick hesitated a moment; for some reason he felt humiliated, insincere. Finally he awkwardly responded to that suave gesture.

XXIV

He found himself depressed in body and spirit as he passed under the arched door of Claverly. What a simpleton he had been to think he could establish any genuine contacts with Francis or to suppose that an evening's interview would make any real deflection in the course of that settled life. "He'll ease up on that reading-drinking stunt of his, more or less," Dick thought, "but he, himself, won't change any." In plain language, he had made a fool of himself, put himself in a position in which it had been impossible really to resent anything Francis might choose to do or utter. He had rushed into this, on impulse, without reflection, even without scrutiny of all the motives that lay behind his action. Dick had an uncomfortable sense that there had been a taint, yes, at least a taint of sentimentalism and folly in the whole performance. It made him moody, restless, rebellious again.

Nor could he altogether understand Morland's sister. In spite of himself he found himself thinking of her, in connection with the evening's experience, and thinking of her in that way, as "Morland's sister." He didn't seem to know just where he was when he looked forward. His heart and mind cried out for that full and deep companionship in which he could have so quickly eased fatigue and dropped the strain and tension of these long hours. Unconsciously, almost, it had been part of that new faith of his to assume, having fought and won in his bitter struggle, that the rewards of that conflict—rewards for which, in such great part, he had been able to endure it—would be satisfying and sure. But slowly, imperceptibly, the future had clouded for him of late. The high joy and confidence seemed draining out of life; the fresh flame of his idealism was burning low. He

began to wonder a little about Dr. Barrett, as though he were seeing that controlled and self-exacting life from a new angle, now. He, Barrett, was not "religious." Yet, granted his little mannerisms—the precise speech, the self-conscious stiffness of relationship—it was not because he looked for certified rewards that he maintained his standards of thought and conduct; rather, because, if they were fair and sensible and true, they were their own reward, their excellence, in itself, enough. For the first time Dick got an inkling of the meaning and dignity of the philosophic point of view; he felt a little ashamed of his own brash absolutisms as he thought of Barrett this evening.

He turned wearily toward the Yard and the creaking stairs of Mathews. He was sick to death of dormitory existence, was beginning to move toward that point where life would be inconceivable to him without love and marriage; already there was a gulf he could never recross between boyhood, its objective and impersonal joys and interests, and his present spirit, lonely in an uncertain world. Of course he had Phil to go back to, but the freshman seemed very young and far away to him that night; however, he was a real person, thank God, and a true-blue friend. Dick's heart was grateful for that.

It was late, quite by Phil's usual bed-time, but he was very alertly sitting up, apparently absorbed in study. Dick dropped his hat and threw himself full length on the window-seat.

"Phil," he said slowly, "I'm absolutely done for! Chuck your books and read me something."

"Was he in?" said Phil breathlessly.

"Sure. Where'd you think I'd been all this time? Sitting on a curbstone in the Square? Sure he was in. Read that thing of O'Reilly's, will you? The one that starts—

"'My friend he was; my friend from all the rest.'"

So Phil, in his high, clear voice, read the stanzas. When he had finished, Dick sat up slowly, repeating the last couplet:

" 'Too late we learn—a man must hold his friend
Unjudged, accepted, trusted to the end.'

That's the dope, isn't it?" he said sombrely.

"Say," Phil broke out, "aren't you going to tell me anything about it! Wasn't he dumbfounded when he saw you? I began to think you'd never get back!"

"Almost bursting to hear, aren't you?" said Dick, yawning lazily. "I didn't think you were exactly buried in that book when I came in, for all you looked so studious!" Then, he added quietly: "Just what did you expect I was going to tell you, Phil?"

Spenser flushed crimson at that. For a moment silence filled the room. It made the slender lad feel very young, and also, for a moment, rather out of it all, and miserable; then he said slowly:

"Nothing, of course, that I'm not supposed to hear. I don't want to butt in."

"Well, here's the truth, and I want you and that fat little word-spieler of a Monty to be spreading it: Whatever has been happening in the past nobody knows, and if they did it's nobody's business. But from to-day on Morland isn't drinking in secret nor doing anything else, for that matter, that he oughtn't to. It simply isn't so, do you get that? And he isn't shut up like a clam in Claverly, and if any fellow thinks he is all he's got to do is to go round there and see the latch-string out for himself. His door wasn't locked to-night; I walked right in. And lastly, old man," said Dick, "for strictly private and home consumption, there isn't much to Morland and I don't believe anyone could make a gentleman or a hero out of him. But I suppose he and the rest of us can do something. There's another meeting of the Cercle next Friday; he'll be there and Kulmer, too. If we can bring them together in some decent fashion, the thing's ended. I suppose I'm going to try to do it. If you get something started you might as well go on with it."

There was a little silence, then Phil spoke up:

"Dick, I've got to tell you something before I go to bed to-night. I hated Morland when I saw you starting out for Claverly this evening; just hated him. He's an awfully fascinating fellow, and I—well, I didn't trust him, I didn't want to see you make up with him."

"Jealous?" Dick laughed lightly.

"I guess so, a little. But not altogether. It was sort of looking after you, pride and loyalty for you that made me dislike it more. You're too good for him," fiercely, "too big, and too—too simple. It's your very greatness that might make him pull the wool over your eyes."

"Well, he didn't. I do rather think he tried to. Darn queer that that kind of chap doesn't realize that we can see through him. I did make more or less of a fool of myself, though, by going up there. Ought to have taken your advice, I guess, and kept out of it. Just the same, now I'm in it, I'm going to see it through. 'Fascinating,' did you call him? Well, that isn't just the word you'd have used to describe him to-night. You and I'd better thank our lucky stars the Lord didn't make all men on Morland's plan. Why, Phil, I wouldn't give your little finger for a thousand like him! But I'm sorry for him. That's what got his goat partly—he couldn't stick it! But I can't help it, I am sorry for him. But I'll not say anyone would better trust or depend on him much. However, old chap, you and I don't need to."

A few minutes later in his sleeping suit he strolled over to the door of Phil's bedroom. The lad was sitting on the edge of the mattress unlacing his shoes.

"See here, Phil, you know you didn't put in any application for a room last month. What are you going to do in the fall?"

The boy looked up at him with unhappy eyes.

"Is it absolutely certain that you won't be back another year?"

"I'll probably be in Boston near the Medical School. But I certainly shan't be near the Yard. And look here, you

mustn't room alone next year. You aren't the kind it's good for."

There was silence until Phil finished undressing and got into bed. He pulled the clothes about his chin and turned off the gas. Dick came and sat down by the bedside in the dim light that entered from the study.

"Perhaps you're thinking," said Phil slowly from the midst of his pillows, "that I'll be starting out to hunt for a companion. I'll never do that again! I got enough when I offered my friendship to Morland." He turned his head away on the pillow. "Anyway, I don't want to room with anybody next year. I'd rather be alone after these last months."

"Nonsense, Phil, we can't take it that way. You know it isn't going to be asking favors, it's granting them if you sign up with a man. Don't you forget that!"

"Dick, I don't want anyone else but you!" He swallowed hard and looked up with shining eyes, the proud and delicately modelled head thrown back on its white pillow. "I'm through," he went on. "I've had one roommate and I found out before it was too late just what a one! And as long as I'm alive and you're alive, no matter what we do or where we are, we belong together. Nothing can take that away from us, can it!"

Phil's hand slipped out from under the clothes and Dick laid his arm along the side of the bed and took it. "Sure thing," he said. "That's always a sure thing."

"I've learned something from you, Dick, that I came mighty near not seeing. The biggest thing in life isn't a brilliant mind; it's a comprehending spirit, a sort of power to take the world inside yourself and understand it and be at one with it. Some—sometimes I think you've got a great deal more to give than anyone will ever know how to take. And that's why I want you to—to come back here next fall. I don't want you to be alone in Boston, Dick. Because," he gulped, "because I've an idea you'll always be a lonely chap anyway. Why—why not come back?"

"No, Phil, you can't turn back the water that's passed under the bridge. College is over for me. I've a new life ahead, and where that is, there I've got to be. But I'm glad you want it; I'm darn glad you told me that you want it."

Once more there was silence for a little while. But by and by Dick spoke again, uncertainly this time. The difficulty, the pride, the suffering in his voice made Phil's grasp tighten.

"Say, Phil, going back to Morland. It was a most extraordinary thing. I'd been thinking of him as he was as a freshman. I thought he'd be the same man, only older. My God, Phil, he was different; it was someone else! It was sort of awful—I felt as though I were talking with a perfect stranger; made me feel there was something indecent about saying what I did, and—and seeing what I did, and butting in there with this man who was no one, no one I knew at all. It made the whole thing seem false and degrading. But, Phil, in that stranger was the old Morland, too, only finished, developed, brought out where you could see, really see what he was. I tell you, Phil, it was awful; it frightens me!"

There was not a word from the younger lad.

"Phil," Dick went on presently, rather jerkily, "have you —you ever been in love?"

"No, Dick. But—but I want to be," he added quaintly. "I think and—and dream a lot about it," he concluded in a whisper.

"It's about all dreams," said Dick bitterly. "You build up everything around that vision—that vision of Her. You see Her in every way and under all circumstances. You take out from inside your soul everything that's sweetest and most secret and means most to you, and you give everything, the best, the worst, lay it all at Her feet; and in those dreams, if you're in love, always that girl you see understands and ennobles and takes it up. But, Phil——" he stopped, breathing hard and heavily. Phil slid his arm up and laid his cheek on it; but he said nothing.

"Oh, Phil, when you're in love, certainly, truly in love, won't, won't the reality, the girl herself, be like that vision you build up all round her, of her, by her; won't she be like it?"

It was quite a little space of time before Phil answered, and when he did he chose his words with care and difficulty.

"No, Dick, I don't suppose that would be quite the truth. I don't think she'd be like that, but if—if she is to you what you thought she was when you made that vision, she'd be different, but better. I think you'll always think, if she's like the thing that made the love, that while's she's different, she's better."

"But if it isn't better——"

"Dick, may I say something?"

"Yes, Phil."

"Then, wait, Dick. Oh, Dick, if it isn't better, wait! You're the kind that's just certain to really love and be loved. Dick, I know that some time you're going to marry. The right kind of a girl would be in Heaven with you, and you with her. You'd always be lonely; you always will; but I don't think that means you'll be unhappy. But, Dick, if you're not certain—wait! It's too hard to be lonely and unhappy, both."

Another long pause; then Dick got up.

"Good-night. I'm all right. Don't you lie awake and worry."

* * * * *

Francis did not forget to lock the door for a second time on this same evening. As Dick went out he bolted it and then threw himself into the easy-chair. The exquisite relief of being alone, of having got through it, of being able to relax and be himself, was enough for the moment. It had been an incredible, yet-to-be-realized experience. But it was over and Blaisdell would get hold of Kulmer, and the fears Jack's words had roused in him were being calmed. How delicious the soothing of those fears. Merely to go over and over the

events of these last hours in their relation to his present situation was sufficient for a while.

He had probably more or less reinstated himself with Blaisdell. Yes, he was really sure of it; he must have; it was essential to his self-esteem to be able to assert and believe that. He reviewed every word and glance and gesture of his and Dick's during that last hour, in order to deduce the proofs of it. Considering the total unexpectedness of the "attack" and the "difficult" situation in which it found him, he had conducted himself reasonably well. "I didn't really welch. That breakdown was nerves, there was nothing else in it. Not that I'm not ashamed a bit of some things; but he didn't make me so; that was of my own will; and damned indecent it was to have another man witness it. Of course, for a man like me, that hurt. Certainly there wasn't "timidity" in what I'd been saying to him previously! I've meant right along to cut out that drinking and reading by myself. I knew I was really doing a bit too much of it. I'm jolly well catapulted out of it now. Just as well!"

He sat and let down, and mused and chewed the cud of safety and solitude again with an added sense of having conquered something, arrived at some new insight. He felt penitent and pleased and rather virtuous. "Heavens," he thought, "what an absolutely inexplicable man!" He felt as though he'd been put through a wringer.

Soon his mind ran off almost insensibly into another and, as it seemed to him, very high and fascinating speculation. Speaking to Blaisdell about the Church had crystalized into a tiny point of beginning a good deal of vague interest and curious attraction that had been running in him that way. He conceived of Catholics, so far as he had any definite notion of them at all, as at once romantic and austere figures. The cellibate priests, the pale nuns with their unseeing eyes, the air of another world, the physical seclusion, the peace, the security, the high disdain in the eyes of these people for this world—all these things made them into appealing figures. The gorgeous services, all the apparatus of the senses em-

ployed to gratify, and in gratifying, to control and lift one over, the senses—he began to dwell with a new and curious interest on that. They, the Catholics, had the lights, and the music, and the incense, and the sumptuous stoles and copes, and the bare, brown habit of the monk as well—they had all these things that appealed to eye, and touch, and a certain sort of imagination. And they had these things as those who could use them because they had conquered, passed beyond, the world in which they were ends in themselves—use them now not for gratifying the senses, but for at once expressing and enslaving them to the spirit. They built the dim and intricate richness of their great churches, which were as splendid and yet more splendid than any palaces of emperors or kings; but they built them for God, not men, and, since they were for God, all these men could use and delight in them as being also the expression and abode of their own spirits. The old meeting-houses of his forebears were so blank and dreary. But here were these grave and splendid monuments, these sumptuous palaces of God; and they were not bleak and empty, they were always inhabited; one went within them and always, far down the aisle, under the lofty vaults, beyond the long row of the arcades, far beyond and high up, beneath the crimson lamp with its dusky yellow flame—always in these great palaces, on the high and gleaming altar, under that lamp, was the Presence.

They, these strange, romantic, noble, beautiful folk—they had renounced all the things of the world and had them all back, sublimated, certified and made right in this way. How rich and sweet, with what unusual and selected pleasures, was their high life! In the vast refuge of the Church all these were in safety and at peace; life still throbbed and was still felt and experienced, was still explored and understood. But all was done for Heaven. He sunk into a half-intoxicated revery of semi-sensuous, semi-mystical pleasure. Great statements of high Catholic virtue were floating through his brain: "Say unto all sorts and kinds of happiness, 'I can do without thee; with self-renunciation life begins.'" How

sweet that renunciation! As though you were not really renouncing anything, but getting it all back in a new and better way; his self craved for it. "Life to be the highest must be made up of conscious, voluntary sacrifice. The draft is bitter on the lips, but there is a rapture in it that makes all life beneath it dross forever." Oh, he was sure he could feel that rapture, and was sure he could renounce the dross. He longed for the penitence, and the scourging, and the self-sacrifice. A bare whitewashed cell, a vaulted ceiling—how noble this simplicity, how easy the high and quiet life in such surroundings! Without quite daring the impiety of phrasing it in mental words, he thought the picture of an ebon and ivory crucifix on the wall of that white, vaulted cell, lifted high betwixt the vaulting and the floor, isolated, stark and awful.

He began to move about his rooms. He would change things here. He was filled with distaste now for the delicate furniture and the old swords and prints. He was through with these dainty, secular things. Again he didn't quite phrase the thought, but the mental picture was of some impressive rearrangement of that interior which should indeed startle and subdue into silence the rest of the men when they should see it. That would arouse their envy and stop their stories! He was a gentleman and a gentleman's son. If he should turn himself toward this splendid aristocracy of religion, with its combination of sensuous and mystical charm, he would do it bearing himself with lofty and unruffled poise, while all the other people gaped and talked. "A Son of the Church!" He turned the phrase over in his mind. A Son of that ancient Church which is forever going on, while empires wax and wane and civilizations are overturned and perish. Perhaps he, too, living above and beyond the crowd, might know the dim richness of her atmosphere while they still had the light of common day.

He began taking out the books in his low shelves, and when they were all on the floor he started rearranging them. The French tales, the Italian novelle? There crossed his

mind the burning of them in the grate, like Savonarola's vanity bonfire in the piazza of the Signoria. Some time? He consigned them now to a distant lower shelf. In the middle sections of the case he arranged his calf-bound books, evenly as regards color and height, until they pleased him; cleared the top of the case of pipes and mugs, and in the empty space, where swords and prints had been, tacked up a Medici print which he fished out of one of his drawers, a copy of Fra Angelico's Annunciation. Then he placed tall candlesticks on either side of it. He liked the bare wall. How the print stood out on that new emptiness! He liked the tall lines of the candlesticks; he liked to see the flame quiver, rise, fall, quiver again, and then burn steadily in the silent room.

Well, there was nothing more that he could do to-night, but he was very seriously interested—he knew he was, he was very genuinely so. And he wanted to express this penitence of his, show himself fine, generous, magnanimous, even if laying himself open to misunderstanding; do something noble at once. His mind reverted to the reference that Blaisdell had made to his mother and sister, and then went further back to that evening when he had talked so bitterly about Blaisdell and Felicia had so spiritedly defended him. Ah, here was his chance! Now he would prove what manner of man he was! He would write and tell her that he had been mistaken about this man, say it in so many words, tell her the man after all was—well, what he was. He sat down at the desk, carefully selected his pen, and very carefully and beautifully wrote:

"Dear Felicia: Mr. Blaisdell has been up here to-night, and it has reminded me of our conversation regarding him. He is a perfectly incomprehensible person, but I feel quite sure, after our talk together, that he is straight, and, as I have reason to believe, nowadays very much of a man. I am glad to be able to write this. Faithfully yours,

"Francesco."

XXV

"I'VE got an awful pain in my sawdust!" said Monty gloomily.

It was a sticky afternoon in June; Monty was reclining on the window seat of the room in Mathews, an open notebook, its leaves rather sparsely covered with scrawled hieroglyphics, lying idly in his lap. On the other end of the bench was Phil, absorbed in his own notes, and occasionally referring to a Ploetz *Epitome* which lay beside him.

"What did you say?" he inquired absently.

"I said," replied Monty, in yet more aggrieved and lugubrious tones, "that I was uncomfortable in my solar-plexus, that I felt a distinct disturbance in the region of the abdominal cavity—in other words, that my tummy ached! And I will now rub it," he continued, passing the tips of his fingers in a slow, rotary motion over the pit of the offending member, "and perhaps that ocular demonstration will help my meaning to percolate through the impervious surface of your dome. D'you get me now?"

"Perhaps I might if I hadn't forgotten the beginning of that rigmarole before you got to the end of it. Don't worry about your stomach; you'd better be thankful your head doesn't ache!"

"I don't know whether it *is* my tummy," continued Monty plaintively. "It came on me as soon as I took up my History I notebook; probably it's my heart. No tongue could tell what happy, trusting faith in human kind that course has shattered for me. I came, a simple child of nature, to this big, bad place, but some day, all because of that course, I shall leave it a cynical and broken-hearted man!"

"It's Chandler's Greek that's queered me with teaching,"

said Phil. "I liked that stuff till he took it up sentence by sentence and explained away every illusion."

"It was the mid-year exam," went on Monty, calmly oblivious. "The Widow gave me a little assistance for some slight compensation at that troublous time, and I climbed the stairs to Upper Mass. a joyous, happy little thing just exuding European History from every pore! Through the long, quiet hours of that morning the shining blue books fell from my busy hands. Then, when I had gleaned my teeming brain, I handed those dinky books to the assistant; yes, gave them all, one big and three little ones, to that same flossy young instructor. He had a face that only a mother could love, and when he looked into my pure eyes and enquired, 'Did you write all these?' and I modestly but bravely admitted the soft impeachment, he said—— But I won't tell you what he said! Brief, lurid words fell from his lips that day. Naughty words mamma had told me not to say! And what did I get in the course? A beggarly C+! I've walked proudly but sadly through the Yard since then, all my illusions trailing in the dust!"

"Probably saw you writing so fast he knew you hadn't anything to say," murmured Phil. "I should hate, myself, to have your genius for drool. You must get so used to talking without saying anything."

"Honest," replied Monty grining, "my young ideals are terribly moth-eaten. I feel just as if my wings were moulting! Doesn't everything seem sort of flat and dull to you now the year's most over?"

"I went through that some time ago," said Phil shortly. "'College life,' as the Sunday supplements call it, doesn't exist anyway, and, if it did, it wouldn't satisfy anyone but fools and loafers. But cork up now; I've got to work."

"Don't speak harshly to me," said Monty. "I was reared a pet! I don't mind being called a fool, because I know I'm not one. But I won't let any man call me a loafer; that comes too near home! Gee, the trouble is I got just what I asked for, freshman year, and it wasn't half so satisfying as I thought it would be."

"You made the First Ten of the Dickey. Isn't that what every freshman in his heart of hearts is supposed to want? You've got no kick coming!"

"Look here, Phil, since you've spoken of it yourself, will you tell me something? Did you fellows who didn't make it really care an awful lot about it? I don't mean the great crowd of chaps who never had even a look-in from the beginning and knew it, and never once thought of being taken. But there's a bunch of men like yourself, quiet fellows, not great on going 'round with the boys, but who are the real sort and might perfectly well expect it. Do you think they really mind a lot?"

Phil's dark eyes looked out steadily at him.

"I can't speak for the rest; I know I minded it. What with all I went through before the Mid-Years, because of my own assininity, and then not 'making' anything this spring, Harvard College was a pretty sober proposition to me. But you get over it; it seems as if you could get over anything if you had to! I don't care now—much. I guess it isn't so much that I wanted to be in as that I didn't want to be left out! Do you get a lot out of it?"

"Well," said Monty, "I can't answer for the others. As far as I'm concerned, no. Of course, that first night when I heard the Dickey Chant coming down the street, and the men stopped in front of Claverly and yelled like fiends, and pulled me out, and threw me into that mob, and I knew all the other fellows knew that I'm made the First Ten, why I was terribly excited and scared and happy. But as a matter of fact, it's made mighty little difference in my year; sometimes I don't think it's worth the dues and things. Everybody tends to be like everybody else down there. It's just the same sort of fellows with the same point of view and pretty much the same set of ideas and the same old easy habits that you've played 'round with all your life. It's a good deal like lying down on the family sofa instead of paddling your own canoe. I don't know as I want to

turn out a sort of dilapidated work of art in human shape only fit to ornament a club window!"

"'Goods slightly damaged. Value greatly reduced,'" quoted Phil grimly.

"You need so much patience to get on with your parents," plaintively continued Monty. "Dad and I are always scrapping. Can't seem to understand each other. He thinks life isn't worth living if you get more than a ten-cent car fare away from the Gilt Dome. And I don't want to spend my young life gently perpetuating family customs with a slowly diminishing momentum. Lord, I feel about a thousand years older than I did last year in school. Dad catches me reading Shaw and Wells—darned funny chap that Shaw!—and then leads me to the ancestral book shelves and takes down the Waverley Novels and 'The Cloister and the Hearth.' Honest to goodness, I nearly bust!"

"They're all alike," said Phil shortly. "It's perfectly apparent to Mother that the National Welfare is inseparable from the Republican Party. But I've been taking Pol. Econ. I., and I don't believe in a protective tariff—not stuck on the Republicans much, either. 'But, Philip,' says she, 'your father was a Republican and of course you'll be. One could hardly be a gentleman in New England and be anything else!' Meanwhile, I'm reading Marx on the sly."

"Oh, Lord," said Monty, "that's just like Dad. 'The safety of the Nation,' he boomed, 'is bound up with the capitalistic order.' Trade Unions are like a red flag to a bull to him. I can't stick his ideas and he can't stick mine, won't acknowledge I've really got any! That's the trouble when you're born anywhere round these parts, your folks are so darn complacent and conservative!"

"The joke of it is that they never see that we're just what they've made us!"

"I'll say, thank the Lord, we're not!"

"Yes, we are, too. They've brought us up to have standards. That's what background means; it means believing in

something; to know it's part of your job, because there's something behind you, to take some definite and responsible attitude toward life. And then we do it. And then they pitch into us because we don't take the attitude they expected. Why can't they see that what we're doing is only their own habit they've passed on to us?"

"Well, Dad gets my goat," said Monty.

"The thing that troubles me," said Phil quietly, "is that it's I who get Mother's." He looked out across the Square. "Just the same, if ever my chance comes I think what I've dared to dream of I'll dare to do."

"Don't sling that highbrow stuff at me," said Monty. "I get enough at home. Will it be teaching or the ministry for yours? If you mean that it's up to us to find out about things and do something about 'em, I'm with you."

"I'll never be much on the doing things," said Phil slowly, "and I can't get out and be a 'mixer': it just isn't in me. But I'll tell you one thing I am going to do next year. I'm going to learn how to think!"

"Thinking gives me a pain," said Monty. "But I've a great mind to tie up to something at Brooks House in the fall. Not the pious end of it, but sign up with some of those fellows, on one of their committees, and get to know a more representative bunch."

"You'd be fine on entertainment troupes," said Phil placidly. "With your face and figure you'd black up great for 'minstrels.'"

"Thanks for them kind words, and especially for that delicate reference to my face and figure. I don't deserve such praise, but of course I take to it." Monty got up and stood with his back to Phil, in front of the print of Sinbad the Sailor. He appeared to be minutely examining it. "Say," he remarked presently, "Dick coming back here, next year?"

"He won't be in Cambridge," said Phil. "He may be in Boston. It isn't quite decided what he'll do."

"Isn't he going into business with the old man?"

"No," replied Phil shortly.

"Then what is he going to do?" asked Monty.

"I don't know that he'd want it spoken of," said Phil uncomfortably. "He's going to the Medical School. Means to be a doctor."

"Not going into business at all!" cried Monty. "He's got the push and the grit and the stick-to-it-iveness to make money."

"He's not stuck on making money," said Phil coldly. "He's a good deal more interested in human beings than in bank accounts."

"Well," replied Monty. "I don't seem to see him wearing whiskers and being an M.D.! But he wouldn't be a bad chap to have round a sickroom. Wouldn't be stumbling all over you. He's never paid much attention to my sad case, except to sort of throw the general kindness act in my direction, but he'd be a good man to have handy in a tight place. You could depend on him."

"You certainly could," said Phil quietly.

Monty continued his leisurely inspection of the room. He was over by the empty fireplace now.

"Say, I never noticed the Harvard shield on these old mantelpieces before. Quite neat and nifty. These dorms aren't so bad, after all. I suppose if Dick isn't coming back you haven't signed up for this room for sophomore year, have you?"

Phil was perfectly quiet now, looking with immobile countenance out of the window.

"Haven't signed up for anything—yet. Two juniors have got these rooms for next year. I wouldn't stay here, anyway."

"Don't blame you a bit if you mean you don't want to stay on here without Dick," said Monty heartily. "He's one man, I'll say that for him! Fallen a victim to the gentle passion, hasn't he?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Phil coldly.

"I mean," said Monty blandly, "and it's true, isn't it, that he's fond of Morland's sister?"

Phil turned and looked at Monty, a cool distaste in his eyes.

"I think she'd be a mighty lucky girl if he were fond of her."

"She's one of Boston's Best," said Monty grimly. "Don't know as I'd want to welcome her into the bosom of the family, though. Ought to be named Miss Pauline Pry, I'll tell the world. Turned me inside out the night of Lucy Hunnewell's dance, just as though she was used to it. But, anyway," he added irrelevantly, "they'll never hit it off."

"Don't be so sure," said Phil jealously. "Dick Blaisdell usually gets what he starts out for."

"So," said Monty shrewdly, "young Lochinvar has come on from New York, has he? Well, he's got a wide river to cross!"

"It's none of our business, anyhow. For goodness sake, drop the subject."

"Heavens," cried Monty, flushing uncomfortably, "when you've finished stamping on me please don't throw the mangled remains out of the window. It would be messy if I hit somebody passing by. I didn't mean any harm, Phil. I like him. Always did, even when you weren't exactly falling on his neck, either! There's a bigness, something generous and unafraid about the way he does things and sticks by people. The fellows in Claverly just about faded away the night he and Kulmer went up to Morland's room together. By the way, they say Morland's going in for High Church flummery now! Somehow I never could stick that chap! But, Lord, I'd have been willing to join the Cercle if I could have been at the meeting, that second night, when he and Kulmer and Morland were all there together."

"Well, you weren't at it, and neither was I. You'd better come back to History I. I've got to go on boning."

Monty returned to the window seat.

"Say, I suppose then, if you're not signed up, you haven't asked anyone yet to room with you?"

A red spot began to burn in Phil's pale cheeks.

"What of it?" he said irritably. "It's not indispensable to me to have a roommate!"

"That means you want to be alone?"

"Not—necessarily."

"But," pursued Monty calmly, "supposing you took one and he moved in with a phonograph——"

"Nothing doing," said Phil shortly. "I detest them!"

"I guess it was a kind Providence that kept you out of the clubs, then," said Monty. "Well, what would be the 'reactions of your defense complex' toward a piano and some one banging ragtime on it at all sorts of ungodly hours?"

"I would have minded it the first of this year; hope I've got more sense now. I dare say on the whole I should like it."

"Oh, joy!" said Monty. "You remind me of my professor in Fine Arts I. He helped me an awful lot one day. He said the man who enjoyed both the symphony and the hurdy-gurdy was a bigger chap than the fellow with the fur-collar and the high brow and the pale eyes who only wept at the classics. Which was terribly encouraging to me because I knew I was halfway to greatness now—I just love the h. g.!" He walked across the study again and faced the other boy with a sort of embarrassed frankness. "Phil," he said, "you haven't got to do the asking. I'd just as soon do it myself. Will you take me for a wife next year?"

Phil still kept a rigid gaze out of the window.

"We're awfully unlike, you know," he said evenly. "Don't forget I'm not a club man or anything. You'd better be mighty certain you really want it."

"Sure, we're unlike. I don't want to shock you too much, but I've noticed that myself. That's why we'll get on. Regular Jack Sprat and Co.! Besides, my motto is 'We aim to please.' I don't want to be alone another year, and I don't want to room with any of the St. Andrews bunch, or the fellows in the club. But don't you give it another thought if it doesn't strike you right," he added hastily. "I just happened to wonder whether we mightn't hit it off."

Phil looked up at him now with clear and level gaze.

"You'd really like it, Monty?"

Monty's round blue eyes gazed back at him unwinking.

"Strange but true," he said. "Not throwing you any fairy tale. Might occur to you that I don't go around, myself, asking for roommates just for fun."

Phil got up slowly from the window seat.

"All right, then; let's shake on it."

XXVI

FELICIA was finding no small food for thought as spring deepened into early summer. Francis' letter had aroused the liveliest curiosity in her. She had made no reply to it as yet, having an instinctive expectation that more would follow which might interpret its enigmatic sentences. But in the weeks that ensued he resumed his usual unbroken and unapproachable silence, and, as they went by, there grew up in her a faint jealousy and foreboding. Whatever could have taken Dick up to his rooms; whatever could have happened there which would have prompted the writing of that note afterward? Not unlike other close relations, she understood her brother better than she ever acknowledged, let alone phrased, in her own consciousness. He was her brother; he was to be accepted as such; as to specific estimates and definite perceptions, she sheered away from them, partly in self-defense, partly in loyalty.

But something in that letter seemed to make it necessary that she should face him now and the possible consequences of "him," too. She knew—had known long before that first night when Dick had haltingly told her of his freshman miseries—how Francis had indifferently dropped him in those distant freshman days. She knew Dick would never have appeared at Claverly now to ask anything for himself; that nothing could be more unlike him than to attempt to renew a relationship broken in that way, and which she perfectly understood he no longer would have desired to resume under any circumstances. Obviously Francis would not desire it, either. No; Dick had gone to Claverly on some matter that concerned Francis—not himself. She could read that between the lines of the note.

Then was Francis "in trouble"? It disturbed her to perceive how little that would amaze her—as though she had long more or less expected it. It was startling to realize that, the moment it looked probable, it seemed likely; she could not say, herself, what minute and unnoticed observations had been slowly preparing her for that expectation. That he was selfish, stubborn, callous—yes; both she and her mother had accepted that. But it profoundly disturbed her that with such ominous celerity she could believe that there was something more—and worse.

It was rather fear and resentment for herself, not grief or anxiety for him, that began to grow on her. The notion of any breath of possible scandal on the Morland name brought the sense of consternation mingled with anger. Had he no consideration for her mother, for herself? What a situation they would be in if anything really went "wrong" with him in Cambridge! Moreover, the anxiety and protest were intensified because, whatever it was, Dick was mixed up in it. And he was not a man of their own set, but an outsider; a boy she had "befriended," to whom it had pleased her to be gracious, through whom, feeling sure that, if she wanted to, she could always draw back, she had deliberately stepped out of the older ways and associations to experiment with a broader world. A jealous pride of place and standing swept over her. It brought a sort of panicky desire to withdraw from any further contacts with him; she would hate him, never face him again, if he, whose confessions she had heard and whose confidences she had rather unsuccessfully, of late, solicited—if he in turn should be playing any rôle of protector or helper to her own brother now. Oh, how absolutely the happiness and safety of the women were bound up in the men of the family! It was intolerable to be forced to trust and to depend upon them so! There came over her again an overwhelming sense of the value of place and respectability and the secure and ordered ways. Something ruthlessly clannish and self-protective rose to the surface. She went about the house those days shut

within herself, abrupt in speech, distant in manner, her orders to the maids received in sullen obedience. And, what was further irritating to her, Dick, as he came to the old house, made no references to Francis, never hinted that they had met again. For some reason she resented that, most of all.

But after some weeks there came further enlightenment. Lucy and her mother called one afternoon, and the four women—Mrs. Hunnewell, ponderous and dull; Mrs. Morland, pale and gracious; Felicia, watchful, with all her shining armor on, and Lucy, quiet and precise—were gathered in the old parlor. Felicia sensed a dangerous sweetness in the girl's air, and she knew that Lucy had long been willing to see more of Francis than evidently Francis cared to see of her. So she drew her into conversation with herself, trusting that, under the cover of Mrs. Hunnewell's solemn conventionalities, what might be said, if anything, would escape her mother's ears.

"Have you seen Reggie Ames lately?" lisped Lucy in her best schoolgirl voice. "He's just a scream with his stories about college. I really feel as if I've been living there since he's been a freshman. Is Francis really cutting-up, do you know?"

"Don't ask me for news of Francis!" laughed Felicia gayly. "It would be some special dispensation of Providence, what the steamship companies call 'an act of God,' if I had any. I believe he's going to be graduated *magna cum,* but Mother and I would never have known that if Uncle Trowbridge hadn't told us. Men are so modestly secretive, you know!"

Felicia's ready persiflage had never wholly endeared her to her girl friends. Lucy's thin lips tightened a little.

"I hear the most fascinating tales about him," she purred in her high voice. "Imagine if we girls were allowed to act the way the boys do!"

"But you know they really do it for us, Lucy dear. So as to be real, big, grown-up, 'manly men' in our eyes!"

"Still, if we should drink and carry on that way I guess we'd hear from it!"

Two high spots of color burned in Felicia's cheeks. Her eyes were blue-black and dangerous.

"Freshmen always do that, dear; it's just as certain with them as having measles is when they're children. Or, if they don't do it, they talk big about it in somebody else, go it safely second-hand, you know. I'm afraid that's the way with Reggie. It's too bad, for I know you like him. Though really it's rather more than ordinarily stupid to say that sort of thing about Francis. Or did you mean that? You were so vague I wasn't quite sure."

"Well, no, not exactly. Reggie did say that there had been rumors of that sort round about him. But now he says no one really believes them because he's changed so much lately. Reggie say's he's got candles and an altar or something in his room. Fancy now! But then Francis always was peculiar."

"Lucy," boomed Mrs. Hunnewell, "I trust you're not repeating any of that college gossip about dear Francis. I never listen to it. Our people are always liable to be misjudged by outsiders."

"Francis?" breathed Mrs. Morland.

"I've just been telling Lucy that he's going to get his degree *magna cum*, Mother. Isn't that rather nice, Mrs. Hunnewell? Lucy's only saying that she hears he's taken to piety!" She laughed merrily.

"Piety?" breathed Mrs. Morland again.

"So you see," went on Felicia, "we're going to have that rarest of all men in our family, one that combines brains and virtue. Dear Lucy, tell Reggie how amusing I found it. I must try to get Francis to come over with me to see you, soon. It is so long since you've seen him, isn't it? I know you'll want to hear all about it from his own lips!"

After their departure she turned back into the drawing-room. Mrs. Morland was standing rigid by the table.

"What is it, Felicia? Tell me the truth! What is it Lucy Hunnewell was saying about my son?"

"She's a little cat, Mother! Tries to cover up her stupidity by being nasty. Of all insipid, simpering creatures!"

"What did she say about Francis?"

"Mother, she's in love with him—always has been, and he's bored to tears by her. Thank Heaven for that; if I had to take her for a sister-in-law I should expire! She'd say anything about him because she can't get him!"

"Felicia! We don't talk this way about other women. There's no reason why you should be unjust to the girl or lose your breeding, even if you think she has." She sat down rather suddenly. "Tell me the truth! Tell me at once!"

"Dearest Mother, you're making mountains out of molehills. She was just retailing freshmen gossip that he'd—he'd been drinking a little. Only hinted it. I don't believe a word of it!"

"Drinking?" began Mrs. Morland confusedly. "You mean publicly—so that his mates take notice of it? Drinking too much?"

"It's not true, Mother; I'm certain of it!"

"Francis being talked about—talked about in that way—Mrs. Hunnewell knows it. He, my son, food for gossip! Oh, if I had my husband! But, thank God he doesn't know! Felicia, I shall get to the bottom of this. I want to see my brother. I shall send for your Uncle Trowbridge."

"No, Mother! No, no! I can't have it. I won't have it! I won't have one word said to him or Aunt Hannah. I couldn't endure it! I'd rather see Jack. Oh, Mother, don't do anything yet. Talk with Francis first; it's only fair to him."

"I have talked with my son of late. Whatever I asked of him I have no reason to believe that he would tell. No: I shall go to my own people. If Francis is in trouble I want my brother!"

"Mother, I can't stand it! I won't have them talking about

us! Let me ask Jack to come over; he'll keep his own counsel if I ask him to."

So the next day Jack, with his fine stride and lifted chin, walked into the dim, old room. There were no inhibitions of jealous pride or secretive self-distrust in his vigorous nature. He bent over Mrs. Morland's low chair.

"Good afternoon, Aunt Emily," he said, kissing her heartily. Then, turning to his cousin, "Well, Felicia, what's up?"

There was something in that frank and easy address which helped both the women. It was so evident that his sturdy self-respect and impersonal affections took for granted that the hopes and fears of one member of their family group were the interest and concern of all. Felicia started to reply, but by a quick gesture, Mrs. Morland took the reins of the conversation.

"I want to ask you about my son," she said steadily. "I wished to see your father but Felicia wouldn't hear to it. Reports have come to us that he is misbehaving himself. He has been accused of—— I don't know exactly what. I only know he's being talked about. My own friends have hinted at it in this drawing-room. I want to know what is the truth."

"Why don't you ask Francis, Aunty?" said Jack bluntly.

"Because I know he wouldn't tell me," said Mrs. Morland.

There was a dreadful evenness in her voice. Jack's face showed his distaste of the rôle of family informer, also sorrow and concern for that tense figure by the window, perhaps also his impatience and disgust with his cousin. His first instinct was partly to ease the tension which made him uncomfortable, partly to lessen the anxiety which caused it.

"Francis is all right, Aunt Emily. A little gossip got started about him—just as much foundation as there usually is—but it's all over. Mighty glad you didn't send for Mother or Dad. I don't think it would have been a square deal to him. Anyway, they haven't an inkling of it."

"Thank Heaven!" breathed Felicia.

"What was this gossip?" said Mrs. Morland bitterly.

"If you must know," said Jack uncomfortably, "just some fellows reporting that more or less he was imbibing a little too freely on the quiet."

"On the quiet?" broke in Felicia.

"For Heaven's sake, don't take it so hard, Aunty. There's next to nothing in it. The fellows ought to be ashamed of it. It's all stopped now."

"Stopped? Now?" said Felicia.

"*Next* to nothing in it?" said Mrs. Morland. "What stopped it? Did my son meet and refute it?"

"Oh, Mother, never mind so long as it's over!"

Mrs. Morland turned to her daughter.

"I've sent for your cousin to hear the truth," said the old woman. "It is *my son* of whom I am talking."

"Well, the main thing that quashed it was Dick Blaisdell," said Jack heartily. He was talking more easily now. It didn't escape either Felicia or Mrs. Morland that he was relieved to get away from the topic of his cousin. "Do you know him?"

"Yes, we do know him," said Felicia with faint acidity.

"Didn't you speak to Francis about these tales?" said Mrs. Morland.

"Yes, Aunty, I did. Of course I did. I went to see him. He just laughed at them, scorned them——"

"Didn't he deny them?" said Mrs. Morland fiercely.

"Not—not exactly. He was just angry and contemptuous, and you've got to leave it right there, Aunt Emily. You can't go behind that. I don't know what fool yarns these chaps got hold of."

"You don't know then whether the stories are true. Once I could have hoped that you and his mates would have known that it was impossible that they should be true."

"I did take that attitude about them," said Jack flushing, "in public. Naturally!"

"I see," said Mrs. Morland.

"Oh, Mother, please let it drop! I know it will never happen again!"

"So do I," said Jack bluntly. "It's extraordinary how

Francis has changed, come out again since Blaisdell saw him."

"Was it about this matter that Mr. Blaisdell visited him?" said Mrs. Morland.

"Yes, what did *he* have to do with it?" said Felicia quickly.

"Well, there again I tell you on my honor I don't know. I believe Blaisdell went to see him the same night I did. All this talk started at the Cercle Francais. At the next meeting Francis was there, just the same as usual. The chap who had done most of the gossiping was a fellow named Kulmer. He and Blaisdell came to that second meeting together. They went up to Francis and all three talked as if nothing had happened. Francis was—— Oh, just as he always is, pleasant and easy with both of them. After he'd gone, Kulmer said to some of the others that he was sore with himself for what he'd reported at the previous meeting, didn't believe there was much in it. So that quashed the talk. And he's been up to Francis' rooms since then, too. There—there had been some kicking because Francis is third marshal, and fool talk about making him want to resign it. But Kulmer was the man that ran against him and now that he's satisfied there's an end to it."

"But in all this there has been no explicit denial?"

"Aunt Emily, I won't be cross-examined this way. I tell you I don't know."

"I've not enjoyed probing you," said Mrs. Morland, "but I wanted to know the truth. There were rumors that—that my son was heading toward—toward open dissipation."

"Now, Mother——" But the old, veined hand flew up.

"Be quiet, Felicia. This is my bitterness. I shall meet it in my own way." The lifeless voice resumed, "Neither he, nor you, nor——" she shivered, "nor even Mr. Blaisdell have denied these stories. They have been stopped, glossed over——"

"You're not just," said Felicia swiftly. "There was no reason, no good reason, that is, why they should turn against him so. No one of us believes——"

Again Mrs. Morland's hand lifted.

"Young people do not often misjudge their fellows; it is for age that they reserve their misunderstandings. But I will have no evasion, no subterfuges. If his classmates have discovered that my son is selfish, selfish to the core, that he cares for them only for what he can get out of them, that is only the truth which they have found. If he no longer has the confidence of his mates it is better for him—for us—to find it out now." She rose to her feet, a tiny figure, erect, inflexible, the peering eyes, hard with suffering and pride, looking steadily before her. "I shall send for him and tell him that I, *I* wish him to resign his Class Day offices. We want no Morland honored in Harvard College unless by character and service he first proves himself honorable. At least we can still avoid that." Then, without a word or glance at either her nephew or her daughter, she walked blindly out of the room.

"Jack, what in the world are we going to do? You can see how dreadfully they always get on together. Mother pushes him the wrong way every time by her insistences. She mustn't do this wild thing. He wouldn't resign! Oh, I don't know what would happen!"

"Let her be," said Jack briefly. His eyes were hard and angrily bright with unshed tears. "She's got to take it her own way. I'm awfully sorry for her!"

"But it really isn't anything so dreadful," said Felicia petulantly. "All boys drink, get drunk more or less."

"Not all," said Jack grimly. "We aren't all such asses. Just now he's gone on the water-wagon. And, I say, Felicia, there's something else that probably will disturb Aunt Emily when she hears of it. He's taken to cultivating some of those High Church chaps from St. Anne Street; people that call themselves 'Father' and dress like Mother! Talking about the Catholic religion and going to masses—— Nice thing in our family! I give you my word I can't make head nor tail of him. Sometimes I thinks he's going dippy!"

"Oh, I don't care anything about that. He's just senti-

mental—terribly sentimental—always was. When he isn't, he's cynical, and that proves it. We can laugh him out of that. I want to know how much Dick Blaisdell was mixed up in this."

"I don't know how well you know him, but there's something unusual about him, something that you'd really call great about that chap."

"He's unusual enough," she said irritably.

"I suppose you know, don't you, that he and Francis fell out freshman year? I guess Francis took the start in that, and that he was—well, rather hard on the chap. But Blaisdell's been coming to the front again this year; found his stride at last. He's a Yard man, you know, one of the best of that type, a natural leader. Well, say, when this talk started, Dick Blaisdell came right up to scratch. I will say I always liked him more or less—never saw much of anything of him—even when he was letting everything slide; but it was rather beyond expectation the way he stood by Francis. It's what I'll call magnanimity."

"He was over here last week," said Felicia angrily, "and the week before. I don't see why he never said anything to me about it."

"Of course he didn't; he's not the kind of chap that would do that. Men who do that kind of thing don't want to be thanked and paid for it."

"What's Francis' attitude toward him now?"

"I don't know exactly. You couldn't imagine them getting on well together. Francis did say to me: 'He's certainly an amazing chap!' I guess Francis is more interested in pulling out of an uncomfortable situation than he is in who pulled him." Now that Mrs. Morland had left them neither he nor Felicia pretended any uncertainty that Francis had given cause enough for rumor.

"Well it puts us under obligations to Mr. Blaisdell," said Felicia suddenly, "and it isn't endurable. I can't, I won't be obligated to him. He isn't one of us. Jack Trowbridge, I'm sick and tired to death of all you boys. Aren't you ever going to be men?"

XXVII

And so it became evident that one of the turning points of the spirit had arrived, no less for Felicia than for Percy and for Dick. The bits of colored glass in the gay kaleidoscope were still the same odd and brittle fragments, but the wheel was moving and they were setting again into new and unsuspected patterns.

As for Barrett, he met it with that half-stoical, half-cynical acceptance of his kind, beneath which suppressed fires, controlled and concealed prides, were perhaps the more fiercely stirring. Already, after due consideration and clear understanding of the consequences involved, he had given his hostages to fortune as he had dropped his letters into the box on that memorable night. But now June had come; summer would see him on his way westward. When and how he went would depend upon Felicia's final answer; but go he must, and first that other decision must be made and given.

On a certain Wednesday they were going to a matinée together. Bernhardt was on one of her American visits and the exigencies of her tour were bringing her to Boston for a week in June before sailing homeward. It had been arranged that he should return to dine with Mrs. Morland and Felicia after the performance. Very well; on that evening the die should be cast! Not merely the logic of events, but the decencies of pride and dignity as well brought him to that decision. Further delay would mean failure by default. Distrusting action, skeptical of decisions though he was, yet when they were forced upon him there was something of concentrated purpose and a cool and wary intelligence with which he met them.

As for Felicia, she was of uncertain temper these days, possessed by restlessness, out of conceit with life. For her part, she was determined not to make decisions; not because she felt their futility while perceiving their secondary consequences, but because—well, because, although she did not know just what she wanted, at least this was certain. If you made one choice you could not make the other, and for the moment she preferred the enjoyment and freedoms of both. She was not ready to assume obligations; it was knowing that she had the chance to assume them, not the doing of it, that gave her pleasure. Was it not a girl's prerogative, as regards these men, to be pleased with both because she would yield to neither? But it irritated her that events were continually changing the quality and the color of that enjoyment, intruding upon it disturbing and complicating factors. Both Percy and Dick had been accepted as regular visitors at the old house. The one she liked, well, because he was "safe," of her own stock and tradition. She would embark on no hazardous experiments with him; he was of a profession honored in the family; there was inherited competency as well as professional advancement which might be expected in the future; she was sure it would be eminently sensible and highly proper to be in love with him. Indeed, that was the trouble. Still she respected him; once, at least, he had thrilled and shaken her, but—there were cravings, instincts within her which he did not satisfy—she didn't know whether she was in love with him or not! After all, he and his were what she had known all her life, and it had been "something different" which she had set out for when this crowded year began.

But when her mind reverted to Dick she realized that the unforeseen accompaniments of this "something different" were not altogether to her liking. She had imagined, as her relationship with him began, that it meant the entering of a new and daring world with herself as the central figure in it. There she would move, the high and gracious Lady Bountiful, amid the scenes and events of his life, admitted to

their inner significance about which she was so curious, inspiring, interpreting, controlling—and adored as the *Dea ex machina*. But Dick had not responded to that pleasant dream; it was not his occasional crudeness, his robust and hearty attitudes that irked her; indeed, they made a deep, if obscure, appeal. But she could not dominate him; there were too many reticences; her interest in his "experiences" and his attitude toward them were very different; and indeed it was evident that he had never even thought of himself as being dominated by her or anyone! The only way to gain all here would be by the surrender of all. It was in those still moments when she realized that, that she knew how deeply she wanted, how cynically she disbelieved in, the possibility of any such surrender. She refused to understand why the rebellion against it in some way shamed her—as though it indicated some deficiency of self-faith, of fineness or courage in her.

Her unhappiness and dissatisfaction were increased now that her suspicions that this man, whom she would have raised up, had himself become, in some sense, rescuer to her brother, were confirmed by Jack. And that he had so readily understood and approved of Dick's making no reference to this irritated her the more; it indicated a poise and delicacy in both these men which further put Dick out of the "uplift" class, made him to that extent one of her "own sort," only stronger and more able than they! For some reason that seemed intolerable to her.

When these considerations vexed her, she swung toward Percy. She wouldn't decide yet, of course, but "some time," if she accepted him, she would marry a gentleman and take her central place in his house, among his friends and in his life. That she felt quite sure she could do. But should she marry Dick? Really, she could not forsee where she might have to go or what she might have to do or be. Yet as she placed the one over against the other there was some indefinable, secret shame, in the thought of deliberately refusing that high, if elemental, youth in favor of so finished

a product. Not, of course, that she either did or could face it in the bare nakedness of these terms. She was profoundly but differently interested in both these men; she wanted to be in love; she was sure, since she was so unhappy and restless, that she must be; well, it was not an unheard-of thing, not altogether displeasing, nor deeply reprehensible, to imagine that she was in love with both of them. Any girl might confess to that situation as long as the men would endure it. But there again she knew they were both restless under it. What she most resented was the foreseeing that they would compel some decision. Not yet! Let her playtime last a little longer! Not in being won but in being wooed was joy. Still to dally with the alluring prospect of "daring" to marry Dick; still to sink safely back on the other alternative that, if not, she could graciously accept Percy.

But it was Dick who had screwed his courage nearest to the sticking point. He had reacted from that mood of semi-skeptical depression which the evening in Claverly had brought on. Sometimes still he cursed the impulsive folly which had taken him to Morland's rooms that night; he could not indeed deny that he had realized, then, some essential likeness between brother and sister. Nevertheless, whatever of misunderstanding there was between him and the girl, of disappointment in their relationship, was his fault, not hers. His sense of what had been ill-advised in him in forcing that interview with Francis, intensified the lover's trait of demeaning himself in order to exalt his beloved. In the humility of his passion and affection it seemed incredibly presumptuous to expect that she would yield herself to him. Of course, if he were to attain his heart's desire, he must strive long and patiently for it. And then, in the depth and anguish of his love and need of her, his manhood gathered itself together and refused to entertain the notion of any ultimate defeat. Love conquers all things, it should conquer, for him, too.

And yet, he knew, that she was temporizing with him. His deepest instincts, part of the sturdy inheritance from his fore-

bears, revolted at that. The girl he wanted to marry had got to take him seriously as he strove for her or it must be ended; perhaps he had not much to offer but he was offering his all; for not too long could he let her hesitate before she rejected it or else gave and took all herself, with high and passionate sincerity.

Yet he was so desperately—he could indeed have used that term advisedly—so desperately in love. The need and desire for this girl was strong upon him, a desire rooted deep and wide in his very nature; a need no more escapable or to be ignored than the need of light and air, and food and drink; a desire he was acutely conscious of, which was understood, respected, urgent; a need and desire spiritualized by the tenderness that crowned his ardor, by the affection which accompanied and completed his passion. Here then was he, eager to a pitch of poignant suffering, and through the heady mists of these accumulated and purged desires there loomed, like ominous and troubling shadows, these disquieting thoughts and perceptions.

So he faced the conflict between that necessity of purpose, sincerity, wholeheartedness in the girl he loved, which was a part of him, and that honest and honorable clamor of the senses and of the heart which was a part of him, too. No wonder he blenched before the tragedy of any choice between them; decider and doer though he was, his spirit quailed pitiably before that possibility. Yet, when he looked askance at it he knew that, did the issue really come, only one choice was possible; the slow and certain end of all things lay for him the other way. But he could not accept the reality of that issue; and in his own way, so unlike that way of hers, he, too, was saying, "I cannot, I will not have to choose!"

And it might well be that this was true; such forebodings are not always just. Crises, indeed, can be foreseen, but their precise nature may never accurately be predicted. The fates are still impish in their sure progressions so far as mortals can discover. Only at the supreme moment when his soul called out to hers would it lie, with what that ultimate

cry shook to consciousness within her, to show whether they two could be one or only two as one. Nevertheless, the doubt was there, and the foreboding, and when these things begin they also make an end. He knew, now, that he could not live in this uncertainty much longer. But, "It is not her for the desire I want, but here through the desire!" he cried within his spirit.

Thus had his will and mind swayed backward and forward all one long and golden afternoon as he and Phil lay at full length, each in his end of their canoe, moored under the hanging bank of the upper reaches of the Charles. Phil had read, and thought, and dreamed the afternoon away, but Dick had been withdrawn into those dark and troubled recesses of the inner life. And he knew, although they had said no further word about it since that bedside talk in the protecting darkness, that Phil shared his questioning, that Phil understood.

The leveling shadows began to dapple with glancing blackness the placid surface of the water, the dazzling sky was paling into warm and tender hues; he reached out toward the bank, unmoored their craft, and quietly and slowly they began paddling back to Riverside. Finally Dick broke the silence:

"Guess I'll go out to Roxbury to-night."

"Why not take up permanent residence there?" said Phil shortly. "Save so much time and car fare."

"Haven't been near the place for eight days, you little grouser! What's chewing you?"

"My mistake. Thought you'd been there all the afternoon!"

"Well, more or less, I guess I have. Got any kick coming on that?"

"All depends if you know, and she knows, what you're about," carefully.

"Righto, Phil. I certainly owe it to her that she knows that."

"She owes it to you, too," quietly. "Dick, you can't keep

it up without something—definite. This diffused and uncertain thing is going to do you in."

"I know it; I don't mean to go on with it this way much longer. I can't. It's got to be one thing or the other."

Another silence as they paddled down the darkening river. The younger boy ventured nothing more, but when they were back in the Cambridge study Dick took up the conversation again as though they had just left off.

"I don't dare ask for a decision, Phil. I'm—I'm afraid."

"If she says 'no' you can always try again," said Phil lightly.

Another silence; then:

"It's not exactly that I'm afraid of. It's the way, or the reason, or something—why she'll say 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Then I guess you've got to do it and find out."

"Maybe. Maybe I've got to."

So that corner was turned. As he left Mathews Hall that night he knew the time had come to find out. And as he accepted the moment of decision, with all that it implied for what he most desired, his pulses quickened. In his lips were tiny racing quivers; in the high exictement of his hope and his desire he felt sure once more. To-night he was to speak out his heart and he was to know. He felt it would be impossible to fail! Love did conquer all things.

A narrow porch ran the length of the Morland homestead, looking out on the terraced garden below. As he entered the house, Felicia met him in the hallway. "There's a lovely southern breeze," she said lightly, "so I don't think the mosquitoes will drive us in. Let's sit out here to-night."

"The good old Charles has made me immune to them," said Dick unsteadily. "I'd like to."

So they sat in the dusk of the moonless passing night and the floating smell of the invisible flowers rose like a subtle drug about him. His heightened senses seemed to feel the mystic yearning of the trembling blossoms, wet with dew. They drank in the odor of the fresh, damp earth; saw the vague, blind groping of the tiny tendrils of the roots below.

His hand shook as it touched hers; body and spirit together leaned out toward her. The warm and teeming earth, the soft, firm flesh of her small hand, the murmuring of the breeze and the sighing of his own heart all seemed to meet and merge into one warm and throbbing consciousness. Frail indeed were the barriers between the natural world and him and her that night.

He gazed at her with dumb eyes; like one moved from without, put out his hand, drew her, half spellbound, to her feet. Side by side they wandered down into that deeper scented dusk. Between the lanes of sweet alyssum just breaking into tiny bloom, between the swaying larkspurs, the tall spikes of the hollyhocks—bending spires studded with buds so tightly closed as yet—they wandered. Then, as if moved by some invisible directing force, they climbed slowly up the garden steps again; side by side they mounted the terraces, like worshipers who approach some altar on which already the sacred fire is kindled, beside which the ministrant stands ready, for which the eternal offering is prepared. So they returned to their chairs on the dim porch; little sighs escaped them both as they sat down.

Yet, quickened though her pulses were, and delicious the soft fire touching every vein, Felicia knew where she was and what she was about. The mind was clear even in the midst of that troubling and ambiguous delight. This was far and dangerous drifting—almost beyond the reach of moorings, she knew that; but how natural, how marvelous, how self-verifying to be allowed, for one night, to drift wide and far, to drift as long and as far as one might—the will to do that was strong upon her. He was absolutely to be trusted—instinct could not fail her there—so—so that walk could be understood as boy and girl promenade, sign of a frank and tender relationship, not yet passed to where there was no retreat. When she wanted to, if she did want to; when it must be, she could bring it back for them both to that. Almost she felt sure she could love him at that moment; if only such companionship, such sweet, sorrowful joys could

be tasted a little longer, if only he wouldn't spoil it by pushing for that decision yet! But she shivered slightly in the warm air; her finger tips were cold like ice.

But to Dick, as they sat there in the scented dusk, there seemed a faint light about her head. His heart throbbed with unutterable joy and woe, the whole world seemed a vast and brooding Presence bending over them, to gather to itself, to interpret, cherish and protect their love; he sensed that vast and natural spirit soothing, touching him, in the whispers and the shadows of the murmuring night. As he gazed dumbly at her he felt, in that hour, that hers was the perfect face beyond the world for him.

Swayed from within he bent toward her.

"Felicia," he called softly, "Felicia!"

She parried that first use of her maiden name with tremulous lightness.

"Well, Diccon?"

"I've got to know! I can't stand this any longer!"

"Know what?" rather desperately.

"I've got four more years of hard work ahead of me, before I can ask any—anyone to give up their freedom and —and make plans with me. And then there's at least a year in the hospital. Life's hard on men, I think. Do you understand?" he said unsteadily. "It's hard on men."

"Yes, Diccon, I do understand." He had begun to communicate that passion to which he could give no name. It troubled her heart with indefinable ecstacy.

"I'm a poor thing perhaps to ask you for any promise, any sort of tacit or open engagement. But I don't think so. Can't you hear the world to-night? Isn't it all telling us that it's right and natural to do it? I can't keep silent any longer. There's only one thing I want, one thing I want. I can't be asking for it yet, but only for the right to keep on wanting—and for what goes with that right."

His voice, shaking on those last phrases, had shrunk into a whisper. He opened his great hand, strong, capable, expressive, and held it, supplicating, out. She gazed at it, like

one fascinated, through the dusk. She felt the blood mounting to her temples. She, too, for once, could not command her wonted voice. Suddenly, like a tiny fluttering bird, her hand went out to be lost in his.

An electric shock passed through him at that first surrender, and as it passed it seemed to subdue all the heat and the passion of his heart into an ineffable, holy tenderness. He gathered that hand softly, warmly with both of his, trembling violently the while, and then he lifted it, holding it close against his lips. And there, his lips pressed against its palm, he held it as if it were never to be let go, as if, through it, his spirit were drawing hers into himself. The inner chords of her being were smitten to some sort of music then; she was caught up into that self-verifying "great passion" which was flowing through and over her. He was past the power of thought, pouring out the emotion of his life through those close-pressed lips. She struggled still to command her composure, and indeed she could still listen to him and see him, and she found that she could even think out her replies.

Presently, with inexpressible gentleness, he looked up at her and laid the little hand upon her lap. His eyes dwelt long upon her face, as though he would protect her forever from the world, from life, even from himself.

"You do love me? Say it just once——"

She was indeed in the midst of it now. Such a situation had seemed simple as she had forecast it, but there were difficulties in meeting it now it had actually come. Underneath the ecstacy of the moment to which she had yielded was some troubling sense of inadequacy, the sense of unreality which produces fear; some secret shame, or terror—she could hardly tell what. Only she found that she did not know how to meet that entreaty.

"Dick—Dick—I can't—can't be swept off my feet like this!"

"Don't be afraid, dear. It's our love. It's not I—it's our love that sweeps you on. I'm not loving you—you and

I are love itself to-night. It's not ever again now to be you or me, it's *us!*"

She was rather desperate. The gentleness, which somehow took her unawares; the utter trust of him, once she had made that first—it had seemed to her so slight—surrender, shamed and confused her. She was startled and terrified at the demands love makes; had never foreseen them. Something within her withdrew, cold and hardening, from them.

"I don't know! Oh, truly, I don't know. But I must think. Diccon, I must have time to think!"

"We don't need to think to-night, my beloved. Love is here; we are the love; it just is us and we are it. Claim it. Come!"

But now that she had started that desperate attempt to disentangle herself it was not so superhumanly difficult.

"I must, I must think! I never looked for—for anything so absolute! Diccon, I—I don't think I'm worthy of it!"

He laughed tenderly and happily, without a trace of fear.

"Love doesn't ask those questions. It knows. Love doesn't know any fear."

"But it is all so strange!" piteously.

"So sweetly strange, like something we've known all our lives and haven't known we knew it. This is what the sea is always trying to tell, and what the heart says to us when we lie awake at night, and what the winds sigh and murmur through our ears into our spirit. It's just the strangeness of finding ourselves made whole together, of coming to life, of understanding all the voices of all the years at last. Oh, my dear, yield to it! Yield! Just trust; utterly, utterly trust!"

"No! No, Dick! Oh, you must let me speak! You don't understand. Women—women are not like men. I know they aren't. We can't rush things this way. We can't snatch at rewards before—before we've done anything to merit them!"

"There are no rewards in love, dear, because we each offer the other the Great Happiness. Oh, there's no thought of

give and take. My darling, you don't know what love is yet, it's so new and holy to you!"

"That's why I must have time, Dick. I—we—I mean, we—I can't express it! But there are more things to a woman—certain things that go with it, like, like conditions and accompaniments to love."

"It's absolute, dear, complete in itself. Just yield to it and you'll understand!"

"No! Dick, no! I'll not go on like this; not because I don't like you and—respect you. Oh, I do that! I never knew till now how much! But I'm terrified, Dick. I can't give you what you want. I can't trust myself to anyone so! I simply haven't got it in me!"

She was very near the hysteria of crying; he spoke with calm gentleness.

"What—what is it, my dearest, you're afraid of?"

"Oh, lots—lots and lots of things! Oh, how can you men take everything for granted so! How—how do I know that I want to be a doctor's wife?"

Again he laughed happily.

"You don't understand it yet, dear. Not a doctor's wife —*my* wife."

"It's not the same! I—I mightn't like to be your wife if—— Oh! Where are we going to live? What sort of a place will it be like for me? Whom—whom am I going to know?"

A bell, some high clear bell—cool and clear, as though it came from very far away, sounded deep within him. It struck once, like a warning note.

"Supposing we lived in the slums, supposing we had a surgery for poor people, supposing we went to some industrial town and lived and worked together for the operatives —what would it matter? Would it matter?"

"Yes, it would. Oh, Dick, I tell you we must be careful, *sensible* about all this. Let's be sensible and think it out. I'm not saying no! But I—I couldn't be torn away, just torn away from my home and all my old associations, and

my people. I—I want more or less to live the life I'm accustomed to. Of course I do! I can't help it! Marriage —marriage to a girl means adding, adding something more, something that is the best and the nicest and the most wonderful of all to—to the rest! It's still going on, but with something else, too!"

Again that bell. It sounded nearer now, one, high, clear note within him. A new sort of silence had fallen now upon his calm. How ineffably gentle, but waiting, listening, was his voice! He leaned toward her.

"Felicia, tell me now. Don't be afraid—tell me, now that you know what and where I am, now that you know me from inside—— Don't be afraid while my love holds you, no matter what your answer—— Do you love me? Speak the truth, dear, don't be afraid. Do you love me?"

"I—I don't know! Oh, I can't stand this any longer! You—Dick, you oughtn't to have begun this way! If only we had talked about it first, whether we wanted to carry it any further—talked about your future, your career——"

"Wanted to carry it any further! My future, my career——"

"Oh, I know that's a dreadful way to put it. But I'm so confused I don't know what I want!"

Ah! That bell again. It struck close at hand now, within his brain, one high, clear note that would not be gainsaid.

"Felicia," he cried aloud. "We must understand each other. Does it mean that you are not in love with me?" very slowly. "Does it mean that you are in love with being loved? Don't be afraid! Tell me the truth. Everything hangs on it. Is that what you've asked of me? I'm not blaming you, but is that what you wanted of me—offered me?"

"No! I am! I think I am in love!"

"Willing to risk all, do anything, go anywhere, because our inner life would make Heaven anywhere?"

"I'm not willing to say that yet! I don't see that it's necessary. I don't think you ought to ask such questions."

"I'm not going to misunderstand you to-night, dear. This is our holy hour and we must know. Felicia, do you want my love?"

"I want to be married—some time. Of course I do! You know I do!"

"Just what is it that you want?" he said very slowly. "Oh, tell me truly! Is it marriage or is it me?"

"How can I answer such a question! Oh, how can I be sure it is you?"

A little groan escaped him. "Oh," he cried, "there may be in you some true faculty for love. Oh, my dear," he burst out in anguish, "I hope so! I do, I do hope it for you! But I haven't brought it to life!"

He felt a swift and painful surging in his throat, then a flood of hot tears forced its way into his eyes. A little sound of suffering escaped him in the terrible effort not to sob aloud.

"Dick, I don't want to see you suffer! I don't! Oh, don't take it this way! How can I tell for sure yet? You haven't given me time? Oh, was there ever such an unfortunate girl as I!"

He had got to his feet. His anguished face was bending over her in the darkness.

"I know now. You don't understand; you never have understood; you never could. Poor girl, you are suffering under it. I know that, Felicia. I see it, know it. I'm sorry! You—you musn't take it very hard. I ought not to have tried to make my dream come true. It wasn't fair to you. Oh, I never meant to make you suffer! It will be all right. Forget—forget about it all."

He moved a step nearer.

"Good-bye, my dear. Oh, my dear, good-bye! Good-bye! Oh, God, take care of her—she is my dear! Take care of her! Good-bye—good-bye!"

XXVIII

He had only one thought as the garden gate clicked to behind him; to get home—back to the shelter of his dormitory room—as soon as possible.

Phil had not sat up for him that night. The Finals were nearly over, he had but one more exam and that was three days away, so his mind has been free for many speculations. When Dick departed, Phil was certain the turning point had come; he had gone to test his fate that evening. The boy began unconsciously to adjust himself, his attitude toward his roommate, to that fact.

It was indeed true, as he had confessed in that moment of quick feeling and intimate comradeship when Dick had sat by his bedside on the earlier evening, that he, too, "wanted to be in love." Yet he felt something of boyish scorn over Dick's "infatuation"; he still distrusted girls and what they did to men, resented seeing his roommate so completely under a woman's spell. He very definitely disliked Felicia, partly because her raillery at the tea still rankled a little in him, partly because she was taking his roommate from him. She was not the kind of girl whom he, Phil, would ever dream of wanting to marry; so he was sure she was not the right girl for Dick, and he was impatient at his blindness in choosing her. He had thought, as they talked on that earlier night, that Dick was beginning to come round to his point of view; he had been a little frightened then; realized the responsibility he assumed by intruding in such matters. Now, Dick seemed more deeply in love than ever; there evidently had been no need of his worrying, his careful advice had made no real impression. He was a little resentful and superior over that. Underneath it all was not

jealousy, precisely, but a certain rebellious loneliness. He was unable, as yet, to enter that realm Dick had so deeply penetrated. His friend had gone on ahead; he was left alone. That was why he, too, "wanted" his romance. His half-irritable, half-envious boyish heart clamored not to be left behind, to be shut out.

He wanted therefore to sit up for Dick's return that evening, to claim his share in its experience. But every finer fidelity and instictive delicacy said, no; whatever the outcome of that interview, Dick had the right to be by himself, if he so wished, when he returned. So, finally, Phil left a dim light burning in the study and, on the table, a sentence, written in his clear penmanship:

"Dick: I'm turning in. Wake me up, if you want to, when you come back."

Then he got into bed and lay, lay restless and half asleep. His head-board was against the inner wall, the muffled steps in the dormitory entries often recognizable. Not long after ten he heard Dick coming slowly, for him, up the winding stairs. He roused at once to alert attention; it was too early for him to have returned if all had gone well. It was just as he had expected! But, as he listened to those dragging feet, loyalty to his friend sprung up within him, his heart was hot with resentment at the girl. He wanted to go out and meet Dick, but he dared not. What could he do or say? He lay miserable, uncertain, still.

Dick entered and Phil heard the soft fall of his hat tossed onto the window seat. The heavy steps ceased at the study table, he was reading the note. There was a pause; the study light went out. Dick entered his own room.

So he knew, and, boylike, turned on his pillow to shut out further sounds of any sort whatever from his ears; Dick should be truly alone; the boy sensed the profound solace of youth's misery nursed in silent brooding. To have deprived his friend of that would have been the final cruelty. Nor was it long before unconsciousness overtook him; what use was there in lying awake over it? But he roused

early the next morning and lay sleepless, pondering. What was he to do and say for his friend, then?

The rising bell on Harvard Hall began to peal; he called out with a fair assumption of the usual hearty greeting as they were dressing in their respective rooms, heard some stifled, unintelligible reply. Then they met in the study. Phil flashed one look at Dick's haggard face and wounded eyes and quickly averted his own. But as he saw those outward signs of inward suffering, suddenly, everything of loyalty, affection, quick understanding in the slender lad focussed to one fixed resolve to protect, defend his friend. The latent irritation, always too near the surface in him—the half-critical, half-envious attitude of these last weeks—disappeared. Insensibly he passed through another of the stages between boy and man. Phil forgot himself at that moment; he had no other thought or will than to stand by.

They went over to Memorial to breakfast, Phil talking, with a not too obvious readiness, on impersonal and indifferent matters. His very memory and feeling seemed to have locked the door against the impiety of any direct approach to that hurt and suffering spirit. He was oblivious to the fact that Dick ate next to nothing, finished his usual breakfast so as to insure that they went out from the Hall together. He felt now the restiveness of that other; already the human contact, even so guarded and so gentle, was becoming intolerable. But equally he felt that Dick must not be left alone that day, and fresh resourcefulness sprung within the lad, a new authority of touch and wisdom of spirit.

They were safe again in the Mathews room, Dick, his back to his roommate, standing before the windows.

"I think I'll go out. Get a walk, I guess. I mayn't be in for lunch."

"Let's go to Blue Hill," said Phil quietly. "We've been planning all spring to climb it. It's not a bad day."

There was a pause, a little more effort and difficulty in Dick's voice now.

"Guess I'll go out alone, Phil. Off my chump, a little——"

"I've counted a lot on our going up there together. We've had to put it off a good many times——"

Dick turned around and looked at him. Their eyes met. It seemed to Phil there was a long silence. Finally Dick said wearily:

"Well, I'll go."

"I'll chase down to the Square," said Phil cheerfully, "and get some chocolate and raisins. Meet you at the transfer station in fifteen minutes."

"D'you want some change?"

"Not to-day; got plenty. So long. See you in a jiffy."

They took the train to Readville, alighting in the quiet countryside, the low dome of the Hill rising some miles in front of them. It was a languid, slumberous morning, the neutral colors of the landscape yet further dimmed by the heat-haze formed about the sun; the sky gray-blue, leaves all but motionless upon their stems. They tramped along the deserted country road without a word, Phil waiting for the physical exercise, the simple peace and unobtrusive beauty of fields and sky and earth, to work their slow alchemy upon that struggling spirit. Some three miles they went, each on his separate footpath by the roadside, scarcely a sound between them. Then, as the heat increased, Dick said savagely:

"Why the devil didn't we leave our coats at home!"

He threw his off, hanging it on his shoulder and, as Phil followed suit, proceeded also to rip off his collar and tie. So they went on again, as silently as before; once, out his deep absorption, Dick looked up and spoke:

"Give me that lunch to carry."

"Take my coat," said Phil. "I'd rather carry the lunch than have that hanging on my back!"

It seemed a long pull up the Hill, but they mounted it, hot and dusty. Pausing to fill the thermos with cool water, they passed beyond the station, and penetrated their way into the thick timber on the other side. Presently they came to a small opening looking out over a gently rolling country, covered with a miscellaneous second growth of trees. It was

rather a dull and woolly landscape, but no house, no road, no human being anywhere in sight or sound. Only the wide view of treetops, motionless under the June sun, and a long, straight, dim horizon beyond which lay the sea.

"I'm tired," said Dick dully. "Let's sit down."

"So am I. We might as well have our lunch now." Phil took out the chocolate and raisins.

"What's in that other box you've been carrying?"

"Hard-boiled eggs and pepper and salt. Went over to Rammy's and got Lucy to do them. Exactly seven minutes and a half!"

For the second time that day Dick's eyes met Phil's, not quite the anguished terror in them lest something should really be said to him.

"I suppose you lugged them all the way up here because you hate 'em so!"

"Not at all," said Phil evenly. "Because you like them. I wish you'd pour me out some of that water."

They began their lunch in silence. Exercise, healthy fatigue, were having their way with the nervous, spiritual tension. Dick started to eat, and found that he was hungry.

"Look here! Don't give all that stuff to me."

"Think of the breakfast I put away. Besides, there's plenty more."

Dick began to be conscious that the isolation and peace were grateful to the weariness of flesh and spirit; and Phil —Phil was there, saying nothing, seeing nothing, just steadfastly, impersonally there. The hunger had been more apparent than real; the food was hard to get down. Still, he had eaten and again there was less sense of distracted and intolerable suffering. For a long time he sat and brooded, and, beside him, stretched out at full length on the needles, eyes closed, lay Phil. Dick knew that he was not asleep. But he also knew that he was free to be, to seem, himself; unwatched, yet guarded. The physical and moral overstrain began to pass. The need of some utterance of his spirit faintly stirred within him.

"You're a good scout, Phil."

"Standing by, Dick. That's all."

Presently Dick spoke again:

"I feel as if I just couldn't be touched, not touched anywhere."

"That's why I came along. As long as we're together, you won't be."

Another silence.

"When do you go home, Phil?"

"To Pittsfield? My last exam's on Thursday. I can go that afternoon, or Friday—or not till later. Just say the word. Shall I stay over?"

Another long pause.

"No, I guess not. You understand?"

"Perfectly, Dick. You couldn't make me misunderstand."

"I've got to be alone for a while so as to get used to it." The lines suddenly deepened hard in his face.

"You won't overdo it, Dick? Come up to Pittsfield with me for over Class Day."

"Class Day! My God, I'd forgotten Class Day!" He laughed.

"We'll climb Greylock together."

"I want to go home," said Dick suddenly. "I want to see my father and mother."

"Why not go to-morrow then, and just come back for Commencement? I suppose they'll be on then."

"Oh, yes! They'll want to see me get my degree!" He laughed again.

"That's all right. You'll be glad to have them see you get it."

"I could go to-morrow; put two hundred miles between me and—here."

"I would. I'll help you pack to-night. We can do it easy."

There was the faintest, unintended tremor in Phil's voice. Dick looked at him, no longer the piteous terror of the wounded animal in his eyes.

"You'll do your best to hurry me away, then?"

"Sure thing."

"And this is our last afternoon together."

"That doesn't matter, Dick."

"Oh, Phil, you understand—"

"Perfectly, Dick. I'm darned grateful and happy to give you up these last days if I can do it for you. You know that."

"Yes I do, Phil."

"Besides, this summer we'll take a week's hike over the Green Mountain Trail. Please, Dick, don't stay in New York all summer."

"I want to bury myself in work," savagely. "Quick. The harder, the uglier, the dirtier, the more I want it. I'd like to kill, sort of outrage the inside of me, with work!"

"But you'll take two weeks off, some time, with me? I need it, Dick."

The other buried his face in his hands.

"You're a trump, Phil," he said brokenly. "I'll try. I'm not going under. I'm going to keep on living for living's sake. If only—— Oh, there was only one thing I could pray last night, 'God, if I can't do it for her, you take care of her! I want her to be happy. Oh God, it will break my heart if she isn't happy!' I can't go on unless I feel that."

"I think"—Phil hesitated on every inflection of his words—"I think she will be happy."

"She wasn't last night. I had to go away," in a strangled voice, "and leave her crying. I *had* to go away. Phil, what kills you is the awful helplessness of love. I can give her up if she will be happy. I can. I will have justified my love then, and saved it. More than I want her I want the best for her."

"I don't think, Dick, I don't think she's going to be unhappy."

Dick reached for his handkerchief and wiped his face of those difficult, unacknowledged tears.

"Barrett may—he may win her if he can do that for

her. I'll not be a dog in the manger. I'm a man. But if he married her and made her unhappy, or I knew she was unhappy, as sure as God lives, I think I'd either kill him or myself!"

"I don't think she's ever going to be very unhappy."

They got to their feet.

"We'll be going back. The first day's done." He turned and faced Phil once more. "We've pulled through it together. I don't believe I could have done it without you. I thought this morning I couldn't do it with you. You knew better, Phil."

"You would have pulled through, Dick. But I was afraid of the cost of it. Thank you because you let me in." The boy's lips quivered suddenly. "I didn't want to be left out."

"You'll never be left out, here. Never."

He relapsed into that silent brooding all the way back to Cambridge, but when they reached the Square in the late afternoon he looked up once more at Phil and spoke again:

"If I'm going home to-morrow I must see Barrett. I must, and I'm going to. I'll be up to the room later."

"Maybe I won't be there when you come in, but I shan't be long. Wait for me before you start packing."

Conjectures shot through Percy, darting like fireflies in the dark, when he saw Dick standing at his door. In knickers and Norfolk jacket, his face gray with the dust that deepened the lines of fatigue and strain, he presented an almost formidable figure. When their eyes met at the opening of that door every muscle in the boy's face quivered, then it settled back into yet grimmer lines. His dark eyes, slightly sunken from their sleepless night, appeared unnaturally large. They looked at Percy with a new and deeper keenness, as though they meant to take a final measure of his stuff. Percy felt as though he knew and yet did not know that figure; for the moment there seemed no trace of the boy left in this man who now

walked into his study. In spite of himself he felt something menacing in that bulky presence.

Obviously something had happened, and yet the chief effect of it, whatever it was, had been, as it changed Blaisdell, to remove him afar off. He could get no clear, central feeling in Dick's attitude toward him; here was some profound upheaval of the old directness and simplicity which had left struggling confusion in its wake. But, as he analyzed it afterward, he seemed to find part of that sense of ominous distance in the new atmosphere of profound reserve which Dick brought with him into the study, and part in that objective, grimly appraising look with which those dark eyes regarded him. Something, either great joy or great grief, had removed Dick into an impassable impersonality of existence, and that impersonalness had given him a dreadful clearness and sureness of observation. Always cursed with a heightened self-consciousness in any significant human situation, and particularly when he was in this boy's presence, Percy felt doubly confused, startled and ill at ease. But when Dick spoke the evident strain and fatigue in his voice added something of guarded sympathy to Percy's consciousness.

"I won't sit down. I've come just for a moment. You're going to the West next week, aren't you? I wanted to say good-bye."

"Why, yes; I am, Blaisdell. But I shall be here through Class Day."

"I'm going home to-morrow and not coming back until Commencement."

A hard intensity of gaze crept into Percy's eyes; surely that could mean only one thing. Was it possible? Was he to be free of this rivalry? But Dick was going on, his voice and manner fiercely fending off, even precluding, as it were, any thought on Percy's part of asking him why he shouldn't be there on Class Day. Unconsciously the boy's face grew dark and dour as he talked.

"I should like to say that I realize how much I—

have profited from knowing you better this year, and—I want to wish you luck in this new venture." His fingers went up unconsciously and tugged at his shirt collar as though something was impeding his utterance.

"You're very kind," said Percy stiffly. Blaisdell's manner irritated him; the fundamental antagonisms of their natures were in full play. Besides, he himself was on the rack of uncertainty and strain. "I've enjoyed our contacts together. You're going on, I understand, to the Medical School?"

Dick had not counted on the elemental pride, the savage hate that surged up in him when he stood face to face with that trim, alert figure.

"I haven't any fixed plans for next year," he said curtly.

He was ashamed of that, but it seemed that, if he stayed longer, he should want to come to blows with this man. He felt himself swaying ever so slightly on his feet; had pushed himself beyond what heart and flesh could bear. Percy noticed that slight swaying; he made a move forward.

"I really wish you'd sit down, Blaisdell, even if you're only here for a moment. I hope whatever you decide to do you'll take a genuine rest this summer. Forgive me if my personal interest seems intrusive; I'm just venturing on it because of our relationship this year. It is sincere and genuine."

"I've never known just how sincere and genuine you are," said Dick suddenly. "I want to find out. I want to see if you can talk to me absolutely sincerely."

Percy both resented and rose to that.

"You musn't make the mistake," he said coldly, "of thinking that all men can express their sincerity in the same way, or that because a man is fundamentally unlike you he isn't a real being. You mean you want to ask me questions? I certainly don't say I'll answer the questions you ask, neither shall I deceive you in regard to them."

"I probably shall take some rest," said Dick, with apparent

irrelevance. "I may go to western Massachusetts for a part of the time." His voice began to thicken and deepen; his eyes burned into Percy's now. "Very well, I will say something to you. I don't expect to see anything more of Miss Morland now, if, indeed, ever!" He put out his hand and steadied himself against the wall.

Percy stepped nearer.

"I can't help but be glad of that for myself. You certainly know it. But I am equally sincere in saying that I understand and appreciate what you're feeling. Will you please take this chair; let's both sit down."

"No!"

Conjecture was indeed certainty now. How easy, thought Percy, when the dreadful pull of self-interest was removed, to be generous and magnanimous. And how cheap! How was it possible to meet adequately any such situation? Never in all his life had he more wanted to be, beyond all manner of doubt, in motive and attitude no less than in appearance, the gentleman. He seemed not to have heard that irrepressible, discourteous refusal; he looked with quiet openness into Dick's eyes.

"Coming to see me at all, Blaisdell, under these circumstances, was generous. It certainly means that you and I do more or less respect and believe in each other. I know, in some degree, what you are going through, because I have sometimes forecast it for myself as my own possible experience. Please forgive even this further reference to it. But I want to meet you as frankly and nobly, since you are here, if I can, as in other days you have met me. Therefore I may say, I love her very deeply. If I understand you aright, and I am trying to interpret you by what I hope is best in myself, then the thing you could not endure would be that she should give herself to anyone of whom it was not true that he truly loved her or that he could be respected. I have already asked her to marry me once, and I shall ask her again. But I don't know whether she will do it or not. I should like you to remember, because of the regard which

I have for you, that I have spoken to you to-day as frankly as you have come to me."

"More frankly," Dick burst out. "I couldn't but I will. It's all over between us. I wasn't able to make her love me. I knew last night I never would be able to. But I can't wish you luck! I meant to but—I—I cannot."

"You may be sure that I understand that. I'll not make the move, and I shan't misunderstand it if you don't, but since we have been able to meet under such circumstances as we are meeting now, I should like to say that, if you will make the move, I should like to shake hands with you before you go." Dick stood perfectly rigid. "Good-bye then."

"I can't wish you luck," burst out Dick again, "but if she loves you I can wish it for her, and I do. I want her to be happy." With a twitching countenance he held out his hand.

* * * * *

But Felicia was anything except happy. The moment the gate had clicked behind him that previous night and she realized that he had gone not to return—that moment would have been insupportable to her but for the luxury of self-pity. She had fled like one stricken to her room where she might cry to her heart's content. She felt some fending off of self-reproach, some necessary self-justification, in the extreme sympathy she poured out in tears over his suffering. Indeed and indeed it hurt, and touched her compassion, more, even, than it amazed and appalled her. Never had she dreamed of, much less intended, any such situation as this! She had not known that she was really and truly playing with fire; obviously she had not, for was it not the unexpected reality of that intense and invincible flame in him which had made it possible to shrivel every evasion and defence she had put up. She could not bring herself to the old and delightful task of going over and over again every detail of that interview, but between sobs and inner protestations she did go over it, not to enjoy it but to assure herself how dreadfully remorse had seized her, and how evidently

that proved that she had never, never intended cruelty or insincerity or playing with him. All that evening she scourged herself thus, that the worse and deeper scourging of self-condemnation might be evaded.

But her self-confidence had been dreadfully shattered by that hour of stark reality. All the things that counted before in her easy and pleasant world, her mother, her place, her wit and youth, seemed dreadfully weak now to lean upon. For an hour she had been caught up into naked life itself—phrases and dreams, conventions and make-believes, had dissipated like mists and shown her the gulf yawning at her feet. But with that breaking of self-confidence, in order to rebuild it, she began in a new way and with a different point of view to long yet more for love. What chance was there in so dark and terrifying a world as this except at the hands of love? She was really startled to know that he had gone, startled not because she loved him, or probably ever could have loved him, but because, in the way and the reason of that going, something ultimate, final, had happened—happened to her. It had broken her daring and an almost hysterical timidity took its place. She looked piteously around for something, someone to lean upon.

So the undercurrents of self-need and instinct began to run toward Percy. Was it that she was in love with him? No, never again was she going to ask that question. If she had not done that, she might have accepted Dick—not seen him go away like one stricken and heart-wounded. Now that it was out of her power to accept him she began to feel that she really had wanted to; that there was perhaps no reason why she should not have; that she would perhaps have dared to.

No; she was not asking whether she was in love with Percy. She was, as a matter of fact, reassuring, comforting, strengthening herself with the certain knowledge that he was in love with her. That was the only thing indispensable to her now. Along with it, more clearly than ever before, she let herself feel that to marry a man whom you, yourself,

dearly loved was questionable; it meant absolute surrender; you were his, not your own. After this night's experience, with its revelations, it terrified and repelled her to think of what that meant. But if you married a man who loved you, you were safe—safe; you could be happy, not remorseful and miserable any more; and, of course, he would be happy because he loved you!

And underneath was something yet deeper, fiercer, at which she did not look, whose reality she probably would never acknowledge. But it was there. It had been *he* who had made that ultimate decision that night, *he* who had decided—decided—and left—left her. That intolerable and unforgivable consciousness was a prod goading her onward. To conceal that, to forever disprove that she was a woman who had been left one side, that she would do at this moment at almost any conceivable price.

XXIX

"It was '*un succès fou*,' Mother! You never saw such enthusiasm. I don't know how many times she was called back. It was thrilling to see her own motto, '*Quand meme*,' on the curtain. How she deserves it! And you'd never dream her age. That adorable smile—and then her voice! I can hear her now, 'Armand! Armand! Armand!' Such marvelous feeling! Nearly everyone was crying when she sat up in bed and called for the letters in the last act. The theatre was simply packed with people. Oh, how she must have lived, just lived, to be able to feel and act the way she does!"

"She has, I have been told, a reputation for having 'lived,'" said Mrs. Morland dryly. "Your father and I always thought that some care should be exercised as to what players received the approval of our community."

"Ah! But you must acknowledge her long and brilliant career," said Percy lightly. "After all, it's not the woman we go to see, but the artist whom we delight in."

"I have never been able to separate them," said the old woman coldly. "You appear to me to be making a distinction without a difference. I wish to be just, not censorious nor flippant, but—it's not surprising that she chooses so immoral a play."

"Oh, Mother, you'd never think of it that way if you once saw it. She just sacrifices herself and everything for the welfare of the man she loves."

"As to *Camille* I quite agree with you, Mrs. Morland," rejoined Percy. "It is a false and sentimental piece of theatrical writing. However, I wouldn't call it 'immoral' because it deals with irregular relationships but because it

doesn't portray them as they truly are. As a matter of fact, I would have preferred to take your daughter to *Phêdre* or *Athalie.*"

"But I didn't want to see those old classics. This play's identified with her; it's the best known thing she's ever done."

"But not the best vehicle for her art. The classics call for intellectual imagination to interpret them. That's why in Racine you really get her genius. It's not merely the perfect diction and infinite modulations and inflections of her voice, it's that amazing technique directed by her understanding. She's a perfect example of French clearness and method."

"Oh, no, Percy, it's her feeling, the spontaneity and intensity of it, which is so wonderful."

"In *Camille?* I don't think so. You've only to reflect that she's well over seventy and been playing that part for more than forty years! That's only possible because of her all-but-perfect simulation of feeling. Indeed, that's the thing which to-day certainly distinguishes her. That's why I wanted you to see her in a better play. In French classical writing, formal enough, I grant, it's the intelligence, not this false mixture of romanticism and realism which dominates, and so in it you perceive the true basis of her fame. There the mind grasps and, through attitude and gesture and glance, the mind portrays what the feeling would be. She's not the incarnation, but the finished interpreter, of human passion—at least when she acts. Oh, she's genuinely French! It's sense, not sentiment; an almost scientific understanding of emotion."

"I don't believe it," said Felicia. "It takes away the thrill. I know she was just feeling that awful tragedy!"

"It depends upon what kind of a thrill you want. Of course anyone can just 'feel' it if they uncritically let themselves go. And most people do. But if that's all you want, why not go to see Mrs. Leslie Carter instead? It gives another kind of thrill to watch, in Bernhardt, how the great

artist thinks and understands. That's why she keeps her place. As a matter of fact, the famous voix d'or is gone; threads all through it, positive harshness when she forces it now; and the smile, well, in that mask of a face it's a little of a grimace. But the intelligence and will are still there, still directing the impaired medium, and still conquering!"

Percy was enjoying himself. He was looking handsome, correctly handsome, and he had himself well in hand. The coming test of that evening and what hung on it stimulated his mind, and through that his wit and will to their most incisive, authoritative exercise. He was not unlike other men of his type, an interesting combination of fire and ice, ambition and desire; the one untempered, the other unelevated, by imagination with its accompanying compassions and generosity and humility. He was neither blinded nor uplifted by that creative fusing of understanding and desire which is spiritual ecstasy. And this quick interchange of attitude and idea, this artificial simplification of complex problems by phrase and epigram, so dear to the academic mind, was where he was most at home. He was riding well, to-night. He wanted to win this girl; he knew quite clearly why he wanted her; the other man was out of the running; he thought he saw how to do it.

But Felicia was saying:

"Why be so critical? It just spoils it."

"And why be so uncritical? It just spoils it. She deserves and doubtless desires a discriminating appreciation. Otherwise she fails with you. A blanket admiration is no admiration at all. You remember Molière, 'To esteem everybody is to esteem nobody.'"

"Interpreter of human passion—at least when she acts," Mrs. Morland broke in, quoting him. "It would seem that you, yourself, are somewhat indiscriminate in estimating her by her æsthetic achievements.

"Pardon me, but I don't think so. By that same principle of putting one's mind on it we should judge the particular by the general, shouldn't we? May I quote Molière again?

'One ought to be good with moderation.' The length, the indomitable will and courage, of that career, the single-minded devotion to the theatre, beside these you must place her measure of universal human weaknesses; and then relatively, or on the whole, if you please, you see a truly admirable woman. There's tenacious and trained intelligence. What could be finer?"

They rose from the table. Felicia was held by him tonight. Behind the academic tinge of his crisp sentences lay the brilliant assurance of his acceptance and defense of the unconventional. He not only knew and confessed it, but almost carried the war into Africa in routing opposition. Daring along these lines, when it was daring under the aegis of intellect and position, was truly fascinating—nothing terrifying in that.

"Doubtless these are the standards of the new age," said Mrs. Morland, "to me they seem sophistical. I do not observe that they bring the old peace and happiness. But perhaps that is no longer necessary."

She left them as they crossed the hall, as though to go to her own room. In days long after, across the intervening space and time, one picture flashed first upon the screen of memory when Felicia remembered this last year with her mother. She seemed to see her as always climbing—a tiny, erect figure, broken, inflexible—always climbing slowly, steadily, the old stairs. Leaving her children to their new assertions and desires; retreating into the unyielding citadel of her memories, her prejudices, her faiths.

Percy turned and looked full at Felicia.

"Shall we go out?" he said lightly.

"Discretion is the better part of valor," she laughed, a little artificially. "Too many insects!"

"Good; we'll stay in. I like this old room as I do few places I've ever seen. Do you know, it's extraordinary how this house and its grounds have kept their atmosphere? Poor old Lambert Avenue! Yellow brick flats where the Appleton house used to be, and first-floor shops in front of

the old Haley mansion. And yet the moment one comes inside your gate and passes round the sweep, one forgets it. You enter another, elder world; some fine and quiet place. I thought of it as we walked home to-night. The house stands here, a survival of other days, and yet secure—as though it were not aware of any change; its own dignity and simplicity make it impregnable."

"That's because you haven't got to live, keep on always living in it," she said. "It's like a derelict stranded by the retreating tide, to me. I should think Mother'd feel as if she were seeing ghosts every time she looks up the Avenue!"

"But take it as it is to-night." (They were sitting by the open window.) "We have the garden and the hedge between us and the street, and, on the other side, the great trees. Out beyond them, somewhere, is the new life, and all the ugliness and bustle. But the house is quiet, the garden full of repose. The world beats up against its barriers, but it doesn't penetrate. When we came inside the little iron gate we shut it out. Here, it is just you and I."

There was a still fire burning in him. She was increasingly fascinated, not quite able to analyze it, but realizing that this sort of wooing could not sweep her off her feet on the tides of sublime feeling, wasn't, indeed, designed to. And yet the physical warmth of it was more felt and apparent than in that other evening of a week ago. And the will directing that passion, acknowledging it, roused some answering response that shamed, and attracted, and troubled her and pulled her on. Perhaps she would not have known it as such if the desire on his part were not so clearly confessed, so confidently understood, so coolly accepted. It was as though he were saying while he talked to her, and inviting her to say also: "I love and want you; this is what it is; why be ashamed or afraid of it?" With the sense of not being blindly pushed grew something of the readiness, certainly to consider, perhaps to yield to the invitation. The excitement of the afternoon—the feeling it induced that she, too, could live life greatly herself, because she had seen it

vividly portrayed—was still strong upon her. This emotional exaltation which said, "You too can do and be all things," was almost identified with actual accomplishment. She had become pliant and adventurous again.

"Oh, of course I love it," she resumed, "and I'm proud of the old place in a sense—who wouldn't be? But I'm tired of it, too. I feel as if life here had come to a stop; ended. I never used to until this winter, but there's nothing more to be gotten from it. And I am, I just am, going to get out and get away from it next autumn. Otherwise we'll be left behind here to shrivel."

"And of course you realize," he said easily, "that not one girl in a hundred is equipped as you are, for being and doing something new and different, because you have the background and the standards. That's what we owe our people. How really unwise we are when we break with our own past! It as good as never works!"

"You do think so?"

"I would go further. There's something of betrayal in such breaking. People like yourself can readily understand that."

"I wonder?" she said unsteadily. "Our sort of people seem to have come to a standstill."

"But obviously not you! And, without forsaking what we are, and have, you can carry away the best of the old, its insights and achievements, and use them as you lead and bring to expression a new society. Really," he laughed, "it's precisely what your Grandmother Otis—how my father used to talk about her!—did that you might be doing over again!"

"Oh, Percy, you really do understand! I—I don't want to break out of my own world. I've come to see that. It's really not doing one's duty if one does, is it? No matter how much respect or admiration or sympathy for—for people might lead you to it."

"I would expect you to see clearly like that. People of our sort are the last ones in the world who can successfully begin *de novo*. Why thus sacrifice all the accumulated mo-

mentum? In the long run it makes us unhappy and then those, whom we have thought we were helping, are unhappy, too."

"Percy, I do feel that I have something to give and be. But a girl brought up as I was is so horribly inexperienced, over-sheltered! It's so awfully hard to know how and where to begin!"

She moved over to the sofa away from the window, and the clear western light. Rather nervously, abstractedly, she began to play with the kitten. He followed to a nearby chair, facing her, his eyes and mouth in shadow.

"I haven't that particular problem," he said. "You know I'm going out to Van Buren."

"And we're to be more stranded here than ever!"

"That depends, doesn't it? But let me tell you, because I know how perfectly you'll understand, just how and why I look forward so to going. You know it's really a distinguished place of learning; famous men in economics and sociology and political science teaching there; and located in the Middle West, which is going to rule this entire country soon—already beginning to politically. That's where the men who are going to shape the affairs of the nation are being trained. New England is already in a sort of cul-de-sac; it's sidetracked."

"But, Percy, you can't say that. We have the centuries behind us. No Middle West can buy our all but three hundred years. Why, the mother of John Harvard may have known William Shakespeare; he, too, might have as a very little boy!"

"Precisely. We have the age. And that's why I've always said it was a good thing for a Western man to come East and get what we have to give, if he took it back with him and didn't stay on here as a sort of expatriate and parasite. And that it would be a good thing for Eastern men to go West to get revitalized. But most of them won't, and so they just run to seed. Look at Monty Ward's father—like a nice old lady washed in milk! That's why I'm going to

be up and off. There's no limit to the opportunity of an Eastern-bred scholar in Middle Western education."

"I've never been West, but I should think the newness, the crudeness, and bigness of it—— Oh, I think I should always be shivering inside with it!"

"Not at all. Listen. Those boys out there, they're eager for learning. Not like our men who condescend to take a little of it with blasé indifference. Naïve? Yes, but able and not afraid to work; a sort of virgin soil that drinks up and assimilates everything you give to it, and does it quickly. And the kind of things I'm teaching—French poetry and drama, and criticism—why, they're a sealed book to those Western country lads! Think of what the man can do that opens that book for them. It's precisely what they need to supplement all the natural and political science, and the factual courses, and the vocational instruction. And how they are going to take to it! That sort of teaching calls for the kind of background only the East can give. We have it. And the man who can do that teaching is going to be a power in his class room, and in the faculty room, too, and he and his are going to be a power in that community. Well, I'm going to do it. One can carve out a genuine career there."

His eyes were flashing; underneath, prompting, vitalizing that revelation of ambition, was the deeper urge. She knew that through this statement of his dreams he had been besieging her, and her not merely because he saw a desirable partner for those future years ahead, but because he wanted her, and her only, for his own life. There was not a doubt in her now that he would be a figure to reckon with in that new university town and that faculty group. "University town, faculty group"; she liked the phrases.

"I suppose," she said, "in a town like that you're not really isolated. There must be so many cultivated people, anyway, when you think of all the faculties and their families."

"Many alumni, too. And of course the Symphony goes out there every year, and artists, singers and players, come from Chicago. Nothing is more absurd than our complacent pro-

vincials here who think it's all provincialism there! But there's only one thing, and that's the biggest thing, that's lacking. How can I do, or be, what I want without a home?"

"Wouldn't—wouldn't your mother go out with you?"

"After having been born and lived, for sixty years, in Boston! Besides, I don't want my mother. I want my wife. A man's only half a man until he's married, and only half of him gets expression. I'm starved and hungry. And you know for whom! For you! If I had you for myself, and then you and I together made our home a center for the abler students, the faculty people—a woman such as you, Miss Morland, why, there's no saying what you could do with me and for them. And the part, the part that belongs to just you, that you could play in that life!"

"You know I begged you for time. I'm not—I'm not sure of myself. I've been so upset lately, and I've been suffering—suffering dreadfully."

"Don't you suppose I can see that? But you wouldn't have suffered if you hadn't been both brave and wise. Again I just ask you to be brave and wise now. Make the decision."

"But I couldn't, I simply couldn't be married yet!"

"There's no immediate hurry. Let's say we're going to be married in the holidays. I'll go out and get a house and get things started, and see about service. It's indispensable that you should have at least one maid to start with. I want my wife doing other things beside housekeeping. Then we could be married just after Christmas. I don't care for big weddings, but I know that, with all our connections, we'd have to put up with one. We could be married in the old First Church, holly and scarlet ribbons and wreaths, and everything. Really, it offers the very best of the old New England setting for a service like that. Didn't Bullfinch, or Washington Allston have something to do with it? Then we'd be starting right."

"But—but I haven't said 'yes,' Percy. I'd—I'd have to go, then, and—and leave Mother here alone."

"Oh, but she'd often be coming out to visit us. And an awfully good thing for her, too, to get away once in a while from this house and neighborhood."

He got up and sat down beside her on the couch. He took the kitten from her hands and placed it on the floor. She was excited and wavering, as she felt the will and the passion in him. She didn't seem to dare to move away.

"I want you, you know it! I'm not going over again what I have and haven't to offer. We did that last winter. I love you, and I want to work for you and be proud—oh, how proud of what I know you can be and do. I'll keep up my end with you." His voice lifted to a new level. "I'd be afraid of nothing. Together we'll carry on and carry higher, the old traditions. There's no one else, and never has been any one else, and never would be. I bring clean hands and heart, which is your right. We know each other; we were as good as brought up together. That's my handicap; you're too used to me. But Percy Barrett, your old playmate, and Percy Barrett, your husband, are two different beings. Don't forget that! I know I could make you happy. I'm not afraid to undertake it! I want you, and I just must have you!"

He was not like that other. This man sat beside her, leaning over her, and that still heat leaped from his pulses to hers. This man was offering, demanding, something less exacting, more purely elemental in a way, from what that other had given so generously and begged so piteously. She understood it better; it seemed to her that this demand was not too much. With a mute gesture, almost in spite of herself and before she knew that she meant to make it, she yielded. As she turned to him with surrender in face and eyes, he swiftly caught her to himself, crushed her body to his own. It was not her hand, with the self-relinquishment of utter reverence, but her lips, that with irresistible passion he pressed against his own.

She sat trembling and motionless on the couch until she heard the outer door close behind him. Then with a little cry she sped upstairs and into her mother's room.

"Oh, Mother, Mother!" she cried. "I'm so frightened and so happy! Oh, Mother, dear, I'm so sad and yet so happy!"

She sank to the floor by her mother's old winged chair, and laid her head in her lap. The veined and wrinkled hands went slowly smoothing, smoothing the soft brown hair. Presently, with a little sobbing cry, Felicia caught the hands and pulled them over her face and eyes and held them there.

That night she was tortured and terrified with the upheaval of her spirit. For a moment she would look forward to this new life, its certainty of position and interest; but there was another life and another face she could not banish from her mind. He had been thrust out all this last week, but to-night he was there again. And his eyes haunted her, and his voice —her hands were over her ears that she might not hear it, and his tenderness—she cowered under the bedclothes.

"Oh, Dick! Diccon. Oh, Dick, I did want you, but I couldn't, I couldn't! Oh, Dick, I'm sorry! It wasn't my fault!"

But she had no right to think of Dick any more. No, no! Was she not Percy's?

XXX

A PLATEAU-LIKE hill, bare, wind-swept; a fine rain, driven by a shrewd wind, blowing over it in the dusk of an early evening. Gaunt buildings, with that hard sureness of outline peculiar to steel construction, ranged along one side of it. In the middle a porticoed and pillared Administration Building, faintly reminiscent of classical architecture, crowned by a cast-iron dome and lantern. Opposite the gaunt buildings, and fronting them, a line of professors' houses, looking ridiculously fragile, their roofs hardly reaching above the maple saplings set out before them. No separating hedges or fences broke the long sweep of this Faculty Row, but the cement walks leading up to each wooden doorstep divided the lawns into little quadrangles as far as the houses extended.

The next to the last of these wooden villas was a brown-shingled bungalow with a large single-paned window of plate glass looking across the campus, and an outside chimney of field stone. Within was a broadish entrance hall, separated by a couple of wooden pillars from the "living room" into which it merged; and this, in turn, was widened on the narrow side by an alcove, jutting out from the main wall, which served for a dining room. The room was floored with reddish Carolina pine, and had a large stone fireplace, with a thick slab of wood let into the boulders above, to serve as a mantel shelf. Over it, somewhat precariously balanced against the rough stone work, hung an old portrait, survival from some other world than this; the pale, oval face of a woman whose dark eyes still looked steadily out behind the entangling meshes of the veil. The room was meagerly furnished with a sort of prim correctness; there was an old

Sheraton table and some first rate Grand Rapids reproductions, soundly built and carefully finished, so like the old pieces that the mind was immediately teased to define their difference. An air of tepid conventionality pervaded the apartment, and that look of lifeless order sometimes observable in houses where there are no children. It seemed oddly at variance with the calculated informality, the casual nature, of the building.

Three people were sitting at dinner in the alcove, waited upon by a girl undergraduate of the University, who eked out a slender pittance by "coming in," for dish-washing and light housework, during certain hours of each day. Dessert was being served.

"Please remove the salts and pepper first, Olga," said Mrs. Barrett, "before bringing in the fruit."

She was a pretty woman, delicately plump, a mixture of assurance, tenacity and weariness in her voice. As the girl disappeared for a moment into the pantry she turned to her brother.

"It's simply impossible to teach these girls correct service. They see no difference between informality and disorder. What we think is decorum they resent as affectation. And it's so easy for us all to fall into their ways if we're not careful. Which reminds me—aren't you going to dress tonight, Percy?"

"I beg pardon. What?" said Professor Barrett, looking up from his plate.

He appeared much older, now, than did his wife; the six years between them seemed to have widened into ten. There was a deep vertical line between the brows and an air of settling down, which apparently accompanied it; a note of cool and kindly abstraction in his voice. His classes, his Department, his plans for a new curriculum, his forthcoming textbook were his chief interests, absorbing most of his waking hours. He was driving hardily, steadily ahead, living increasingly within his profession. Desire was dying down; he had become used to his wife, whom he liked and upon

whom he depended; his home was accepted, rather than imaginatively appraised or understood, as the basis of his living.

"Please come down out of the clouds, Percy. I do wish you wouldn't always bring your study to the dining table. This is almost the only time of day we have when we can all get together and forget the work, and really get some enjoyment out of life. I asked you if you weren't going to dress."

"Why, no; I told you I wasn't going to. This 'show,'" he went on, turning to his brother-in-law with impersonal pleasantness, "is an undergraduate vaudeville affair given to raise money for their Settlement House. If we put on dinner coats we should be the only people in the hall wearing them, and be laughed at for our pains."

"I still think you ought to do it," said his wife. "The faculty men and women ought to lead in these matters."

"Rather nice, for a change, you know, this breezy informality," said Francis. "Left my attaché case at the parcels room in Chicago yesterday. Said to the boy, 'May I check this here?' 'You betcha!' he responded. Quite refreshing after London and Paris, what! Really, we are a free and expansive people!"

As an oldish youth of twenty-seven Morland presented an interesting appearance. The slim curves of five years before were a little flatter, perhaps a little flabby now, giving something of lankiness to his long figure. The waving hair had begun to recede, leaving a smooth brow which imparted a look of blankness above the eyes whose brilliance was still there, but more softly clouded. An inoffensive mildness seemed to have replaced the suave insolence of his undergraduate days.

"But here, of all places, we ought not to give in to this sort of thing," persisted Mrs. Barrett. "Just because no one else does wear dinner coats in the evening is all the more reason why you and Percy should be putting them on. Olga, please take the coffee to the little table by the fire-place, and remem-

ber to bring the cigars and cigarettes with it. The third girl, Francis, I've had to try to train since Christmas!"

They rose from table. As Morland lounged across the room he seemed to be drawing his body, in sections, after him. Wicker chairs were drawn up before the birch logs which lay on their huge iron dogs, in the stone grate.

"I'm sorry they're not lighted," Mrs. Barrett apologized, "but we have this awful steam from the University heating plant, and even with all the radiators turned off it keeps the house so hot that it's impossible to add a fire to it."

"Well, old man," said Percy, "now that you're back from the Rue Francois Premier, what are you planning to do next?"

"Nothing too definite just yet. I'm going to sell the old house. None of us will ever live there again, and the land's valuable for tenements. Then I think I'll settle down in rooms somewhere and write a bit. Three years as an under secretary at the Embassy give you a corking acquaintanceship. There are some chaps over there with whom I might start a weekly journal. Thinking of calling it 'The New Age,' and dealing with what the young men on the Continent are really thinking and feeling now. No one here seems to have the least understanding of it. Indeed, that's the real reason why I didn't get on at the Embassy—all old fogies there. Rather glad, you know, to be out of it. As long as you're in any kind of official position you always have to conform to somebody's prejudice or somebody's interests. I've enough money, now the estate's settled up, so that, living alone as I do, I needn't worry about bread and butter and can be free, at last, to express myself."

"We hoped you were going to live over here," said Percy.

"Heavens, no! I came back to get things settled, and, of course, to see you both and this place. Really, you know, it's not so bad; must be awfully amusing for you and your kind of work. But for the sort of atmosphere I need, a bit bleak and bare and unimaginative. Got my eye on an old palazzo across the Arno, backing up on the Boboli Gardens. You

can rent a floor of one of those old places for a song. So I may live in Florence for a while—loveliest climate on the face of the earth and such form and color in the landscape!"

"Francis, you make me perfectly crazy by talking about it. Imagine being free to go and live for a winter, if one wanted to, in Florence! It doesn't bear thinking of!"

"Of course, you do miss the metropolitan surroundings here. I dare say life does seem a bit monotonous, starved. One doesn't sense much complexity of interests, varied charms. I grant you one has to live in Europe to find out how mellow life may be, but then, I'm a natural urbanite, wouldn't expect to find my métier here. Still, you know it's rather nice, this. Take the way it rained all the afternoon—the clean, bare drive of it across this upland! Not like city pavements, with their dirty, shining slipperiness and the dropping, dropping of it, all day long."

"My dear Francis," said his sister, "you need to adjust your appreciations. Of course, you always were rather impressionistic! Could anything be more depressing than these huddled little houses, looking as if they were built yesterday and going to be torn down to-morrow, pitilessly pelted all day long by water. Why did we ever come to live by a lakeside! I didn't mind the rain back in Boston. There's always something to do, or somewhere to go, there. I do believe, if ever we go back, I shall get down and stroke the very bricks in the sidewalks!"

"You keep on preaching that gospel about the beauty of the country," said Professor Barrett, kindly. "Felicia can't see the diamond for the flaws. After all, we are trying out a fine educational experiment here, and, if it does have its drawbacks, it's well worth them."

"Yes, and when is it going to succeed, Percy? After we're dead and gone! It's so hopeless," she turned to her brother, "so hopeless to try to make these young people care about anything that keeps life dainty and smooth and pleasant."

"Now, Felicia," said Percy, "remember what I told you. You see," he said to Francis, "she's a sort of get-rich-quick-

Wallingford idealist. I tell her it's not the importance of the thing that we're doing, but the rewards of it that she's after! Well"—glancing at his watch—"after five years you and Felicia will have any amount of things you'll want to talk over together. I must get in an hour's work on some reports before that Convocation." He went across the hall to a small room in the north side of the building, shutting the door behind him.

"It does annoy me so," said Felicia, "the habit Percy's got into lately of locking himself into that study. He simply lives his entire life there, and emerges now and then for classes!"

It was the first time the two had been alone together since Francis' arrival late that afternoon. Somethnig of relaxation and anticipation mingled with watchfulness and caution appeared in both of them, as though each had themes upon which he wanted to talk, but neither one was quite sure of the other.

"Real pedagogue, isn't he? Rather nice, you know, to carry on the academic tradition in the family."

"Yes, especially if you do it in your brother-in-law's name!" said Felicia acidly. "Have you any idea what my life is like out here? The isolation of faculty women is something awful. The men have their books, and their classes, and their rivalries, and their interminable academic squabbles; but we—we struggle along with a house like this wretched bungalow, absolutely all we could lay hands on—this or nothing—and then with as good as no service, and the being so far off—so far off from anything! A floor of a Florentine palazzo for the winter! When you talk of that I feel positively suffocated. Most of the women here are just housewives, and the rest absolutely unbearable blue stockings. Easy, general, gracious intercourse, such as we all used to have at home, well, they simply don't know the meaning of it. Of course, I get on well enough with the boys that drop in, but as for the girls attending this institution, I simply cannot endure them!"

"Marvellous atmosphere of youth, though," said Francis.

"'Pon my word, it's almost fatiguing the way the vitality of the place fairly shrieks at you!"

"But do you realize how hard it is on our own youth! Once a woman's married these boys and girls regard her as middle-aged; if you aren't careful, they actually make you so by their constant suggestion of it. In any other place but here you and Percy and I are young people. But no one is young here after they're graduated! I believe it's a mistake not to have the kind of a life that keeps you among your own contemporaries. There's something unnatural about this."

"That's why I say, live in Europe. Somehow one doesn't age there. But American life is at once so starved and so conventional. Do you remember how Mother never could, or would, understand why I wouldn't go to church with her, why I always felt like a misfit here? Imagine anyone with my sense of form and love of warmth and color dragged to that old Meeting-house with its endless talk and its 'droning vacuum of impromptu prayer'! Had an atmosphere about as thin and brittle as the glass in its window-panes. By the way, is there a Roman church here?"

"Yes, Francis, there is, but *please* don't go into it! Imagine the talk in this Faculty if you were seen going to Mass! Percy and I have seats at the Congregational Church; there isn't any Unitarian Society here. He doesn't go very often, but I do. In fact all the better people attend there. And I expect you, while you're here, to go with me."

"Well, I only hope, then, you don't have any long sermons. I suppose there's a mixed quartette that sings Dudley Buck and Gounod and calls it worship! You know, I may go into the Church, yet. If the writing doesn't turn out as I want it to—and if you have something delicate and elusive to say these damned critics will call it negligible or vague—I may try for Holy Orders, after all. I suppose we are growing older," a half-bitter, half-querulous note creeping into his voice. "Sometimes I think I'd like to feel safe—safe inside an institution like the Church. No one's old or young

there; she's the venerable and mighty Mother of us all! I don't mind telling you, you'd think the things of this world do pass away if you'd seen some of the old crowd, last week, in Boston. Felt absolutely out of touch with them."

"Did you call on Lucy Hunnewell?"

"No; but I did run across Monty Ward. Prosperous business man plus practical idealist! Taken over his father's shares in *Houghton's* and running a Cooperative Department Store. Sometimes one wonders if these chaps who make so much money and then play the scientific philanthropist really let their right hands know what their left hands are doing. Rather like a new form of worldliness, as my sort sees it."

"Didn't Lucy know you were in town?"

"Oh, yes. Asked me over to dinner one night, but really I wasn't feeling like it."

"You know, Francis, I used to think that, in spite of you, she'd marry you some day."

"Never fear. If a man's going in for a career he musn't tie himself up that way."

"I don't suppose Monty's married, is he?"

"Didn't hear anything about it. By the way, who d'you suppose was with him? Wonder if you'd remember him, a man you used to know more or less."

"There were many in those days," said Mrs. Barrett bitterly. "Reggie Ames? I know they used to play together."

"Not Reggie—classmate of mine. Asked very particularly after you, too."

"Guessing games don't interest me," said Felicia rather tartly. "Who was it?"

"That chap Blaisdell. You remember him—Richard Blaisdell?"

"Oh, yes; Dick Blaisdell."

"Well, I give you my word I wouldn't have known him."

"You say he sent me some message?"

"Not exactly that; but he wanted to know all about you. Rather surprising the way he went at it."

"I'm not surprised," said Felicia bridling a little, "that he

wanted to know about me, or that he sent a message. Has he changed very much? Poor Dick, I think he was rather hard hit when I came away. So he remembers after all these years!"

"He was awfully friendly," said Francis neutrally. "You'd almost think he had some sort of proprietary interest in you, looking after your welfare."

"You mean he was sad?'

"Not a bit of it! Just pure friendly—you might almost say, fatherly like. It's amazing what we managed to do for him at Harvard! Regularly transformed person! He came up while I was talking to Monty in the Club. 'Here,' says Monty, 'is the man who can carry us all now from the crib to the crematory. Just won the Bowditch Prize, and off for a winter at the hospitals in Vienna.' Well, 'pon my word I didn't know for a moment who he was. Then it flashed over me that it was Blaisdell."

"Why, it's incredible, Francis, that you shouldn't have known him!"

"Not if you could see him. He's really grown rather handsome. Has a most extraordinary air of assurance and that gravity wherewith doctors and surgeons and folk of that ilk look at you, and through you, and seem to know just where they are with you. After all, it's five years since I had seen him. He must be quite twenty-eight."

"Nine and twenty. He's much more than a year older than I."

"Well, he looked like a young genius. After he'd gone—only stayed two or three minutes talking with us—I asked Monty about him."

Francis waited.

"Well," said Felicia, "what has he been doing?"

"Went through the Medical School with flying colors, perfect shark at surgery, spent the last three summers with Grenville at Labrador on his hospital ship—what's the name of it? Mother used to give money to it."

"The 'Strathspey,' " said Felicia. She had grown very still.

"That's it. Well, Grenville swears by him, says he cures body and soul together, gets the absolute confidence of his patients. Take the ether like lambs if he's round. Has a talk with them before they go into the operation and straightens them all out. I don't know—it's amazing the way he handles his cases, so Jack and Monty say."

"Poor boy," said Felicia. "It's an awful pity he has never married."

"Why, hasn't Jack written you the news?" said Francis slowly. "He is married—only last month. They're sailing together for Austria in the spring."

"He's married!" said Felicia. "Well, I must say I wouldn't have expected that. Men are all alike, aren't they?"

"I would have said," remarked Francis, "from what little I ever saw of him, that he's the last person in the world whom I would think wouldn't get married."

"Who was it?" said his sister. "Some nurse?"

"Nurse? Yes! But who, who do you think? The daughter of old John Dawson, the former Canadian Prime Minister."

"The former Canadian Prime Minister! Wherever could he have met her!"

"On the 'Strathspey.' She went up for the summer, just the way he did; she for volunteer nursing, and he for volunteer surgery. Jack's met her and, according to him and Monty, she's a stunner. They both raved about her. Thought you'd be interested!"

"Well," said Felicia, "just as I said to you before, men are all alike. I don't believe he'll be happy with that kind of a girl. She must be quite different from the type I think he could have really loved."

"At all events they say there's a career ahead of him. You know Uncle Trowbridge and Aunt Hannah see a good deal of him. Since Mother's death he's taken to going out there. They say he's going to be one of the leading surgeons of his time."

The study door opened and Percy emerged, slipping his watch into his waistcoat pocket.

"Do you know, Felicia, these girls get Anatole France better than the boys do. I've just read a couple of really good reports on *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*. I believe I'll split that class next year, put the men in a section by themselves; I could get some advanced work then, out of the women. Well, I suppose it's time we started out for that show. You'd better put on your heavy overshoes; it's still raining. You know how damp the walk will be getting over to the hall."

"I'm not sure that I'm going," said Mrs. Barrett, "I think that you and Francis had better go by yourselves. What's the use of it all? I'm bored to tears by all these boys' shows!"

"Oh, come," said Percy pleasantly. "Go get on your things and start with us. Really you ought to be there. They expect the Faculty wives to go, you know."

"I think they expect altogether too much," said Felicia, "just as all of you men do. Always expecting things of us." She looked up quite steadily at her husband. "Had Jack written you the news that Francis' been giving me about Dick Blaisdell?"

"Blaisdell? No; I haven't heard his name for years. What about him?"

"He's married the daughter of John Dawson. The Dawson who's the former Canadian Prime Minister!"

"Well, well. H-m. If that's as happy an event as it sounds, I'm glad to know of it."

"Now they're going to Austria for the winter and he's already being talked of as the coming surgeon," said his wife with increased acerbity. "There are some men, aren't there, who make their place quickly and well!"

"And that," said Professor Barrett quietly, "encourages and strengthens all the rest of us who are trying to do real things. Let me help you with your coat. Francis, will you fetch your sister's overshoes?"